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The RING®

COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS:
Marquez-Katsidis
Pascal-Hopkins
Khan-Maidana

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YEAR-END AWARDS

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR
SERGIO MARTINEZ

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A Matter Of Perspective

Despite wails of outraged anguish spewing forth from the media and fans alike, barring anything unforeseen, the match between Manny Pacquiao and Shane Mosley will happen. What is more, it will be a financial success and probably a pretty good fight as well.

Sure, Pacquiao will win. But watching him fight is no longer about whether or not the other guy has a good chance of winning. It's about watching a master at work.

It's no different than paying to hear Caruso sing, Miles Davis play the horn, or Ted Williams swing the bat. And just like those guys in their time, Pacquiao is simply the best at what he does at this particular moment in history. It's not so much about the contest right now; it's about savoring the moment, about watching this singular fighter do his thing.

Very few fighters get to breathe the rarified air at this plateau. But Muhammad Ali certainly did, and he fought guys like Jurgen Blin, Rudy Lubbers, Richard Dunn, and Jean Coopman. Even the Mosley of today is better than those guys in their primes.

Still, the intent here is not to justify the Pacquiao-Mosley match in sporting terms. That's a losing proposition. Yes, there are far better matches for Pacquiao out there, but the same was true when he fought Antonio Margarito, and it sold more than a million pay-per-views anyway.

No fighter stays on top forever, and the Pacquiao-Mosley match is another of the diminishing chances to watch this once-in-a-lifetime fighter in action. Even members of the media who panned the Margarito fight were falling all over themselves to come up with fresh superlatives to describe Manny's performance at Cowboys Stadium. It was almost as if Pacquiao had mesmerized them, which, in a way, he did. That's what all great performers do.

Even Bill Gallo, one of the few journalists still around who covered Ray Robinson and Willie Pep in their primes, believes Pacquiao is right up there with them. Some talent is so unique you're only cheating yourself if you miss an opportunity to see genius in action. Father Time will take away the magic soon enough, and then it will be too late.

And who knows? Maybe Mosley will do better than expected. Look what Bernard Hopkins just did to Jean Pascal.

◆◆◆

And speaking of the amazing B-Hop: Although he's more of an acquired taste than Pacquiao, he is, nevertheless, another genius still practicing his art, even as he gradually creeps toward the half-century mark.

If the Pascal bout was Hopkins' last great fight, so be it. It was a million times better note to go out on than the Roy Jones burlesque.

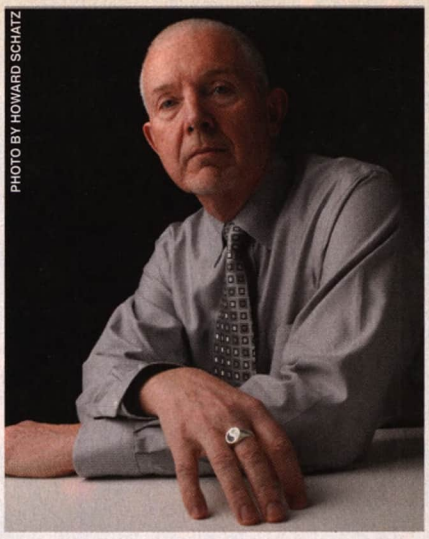

PHOTO BY HOWARD SCHATZ

But you just know the old dog will be back for more, growling and snarling right up until the opening bell. Whatever happens then can only add to his legend.

◆◆◆

Congratulations to middleweight champion Sergio Martinez for becoming the first fighter from Argentina to be awarded THE RING's Fighter of the Year since 1972. Carlos Monzon, like Martinez, was also the reigning middleweight champ when he was selected almost 40 years ago.

The explosive image of Martinez that graces this issue's cover of THE RING is by Howard Schatz, who has generously allowed us to feature a number of his photographs in 2010. His eagerly anticipated book, *AT THE FIGHTS: Inside the World of Professional Boxing*, will be published in 2012.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

The Ring®
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PHOTO BY SCOTT HEAVEY/GETTY IMAGES

HOW WOULD AMIR KHAN BEAR UP AGAINST POWER PUNCHING MARCOS MAIDANA?

Find out on Page 64

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Juan Manual Marquez: Not The Boring One Anymore

"As long as Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, and Juan Manuel Marquez have been splitting eyebrows and flattening noses, they are as good as anything this business has produced, in any era."

By William Dettloff

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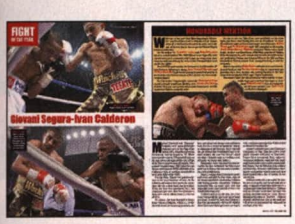

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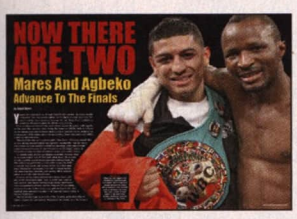
Khan Overcomes Adversity To Beat Maidana

"There is no stardom without peril. Maybe that's why Amir Khan almost seemed to welcome it. For weeks, Khan sounded as if he wanted to walk the high wire, precariously balanced on that unforgiving edge of a crisis."

By Norm Frauenheim

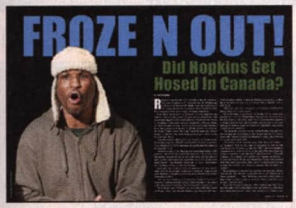


72 NOW THERE ARE TWO

Mares And Agbeko Advance To The Finals

"The four participants reminded everyone what the tournament didn't lack: talent, heart, the promise of youth, versatility, tactical shock, reasonable judging despite the differential in one split decision, or the ability to spur the public to crave the next round."

By David Mayo



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Did Hopkins Get Hosed In Canada?

"Hopkins looked out at the press corps and said: 'I beat Pascal. If you really want to be honest, you know I fought a helluva fight. And you know that, had I gotten the decision like I was supposed to, you all wouldn't be saying that Pascal got robbed tonight.'"

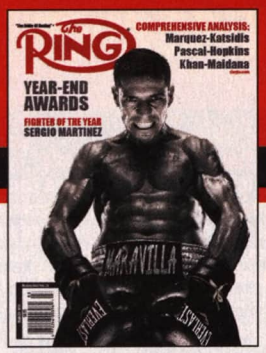
By Paul Salgado

86 FROM HELSINKI TO OAKLAND

Froch And Ward Ready For Super Six Final Four

"When it was over, nothing much had changed for Showtime's "Super Six World Boxing Classic." The same four fighters were rolling into the semifinals, with Andre Ward still leading the way."

By Don Stewart



Cover Photo of Sergio Martinez photographed by **Howard Schatz** for his upcoming book: *AT THE FIGHTS: Inside the World of Professional Boxing*

Cover Design by **David Romanosky**

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THE ONE WHO GOT AWAY

When Victor Ortiz twice decked Lamont Peterson in the third round, "Vicious Vic" appeared well on his way to his 23rd knockout victory. But Peterson beat the count and fought back well enough to earn a majority draw over 10 competitive rounds.

PHOTO BY SCOTT HEAVEY/GETTY IMAGES

COME OUT WRITING

Khan Is King

Well done Las Vegas for the coverage and credit they have given to Amir Khan in his clash with Marcos Maidana and to both Khan and Maidana for giving us one of the best fights I have seen since Marvin Hagler-Thomas Hearns. I never thought I would again witness a war like that. Promoter Oscar De La Hoya got it right when he called Khan-Maidana "Fight Of The Decade." So many top boxers seem to avoid each other these days, but Khan and Maidana had the courage to put their records on the line. Amir showed he had class, a chin, and top-class stamina to avoid defeat in that 10th round. His fast and classy combinations were very destructive. But let's give Maidana credit too. How on earth did he get up from Khan's first-round crippling body combination?

RAY FOX
Keighley, UK

Praise For THE RING'S New Look

The new print format was a little daunting at first, but, after a few minutes, I began to appreciate it. For example, in the "Ringside Reports." The new layout provides all of the key "Match Stats" in an easy-to-read section, with the photo and narrative neatly positioned around it. I like the way that throughout the magazine, special items are highlighted: Who Said What, Sergio's Hit List, 10 Fights We'd Like to See, etc. The photos, captions, and headlines are designed in a variety of interesting styles. And even "THE RING Ratings" take on a fresh look.

Although I sometimes check the Internet for the latest boxing results, I'm old-fashioned enough to prefer reading a magazine that I can hold in my hands, so I can't really offer you feedback on the electronic version of THE RING. But I think the new print format is a significant improvement—well-designed, better organized, and very modern in its approach. Good work!

MEL CHASE
melvynchase@optonline.net

Mad Max

I think Max Kellerman should have his head examined for suggestion that Manny Pacquiao move up in weight again. Spotting Antonio Margarito 17 pounds was amazing, but to suggest he fight middleweight champ Sergio Martinez is out of the question.

ANGELO C. COLELLE
Lynn, MA

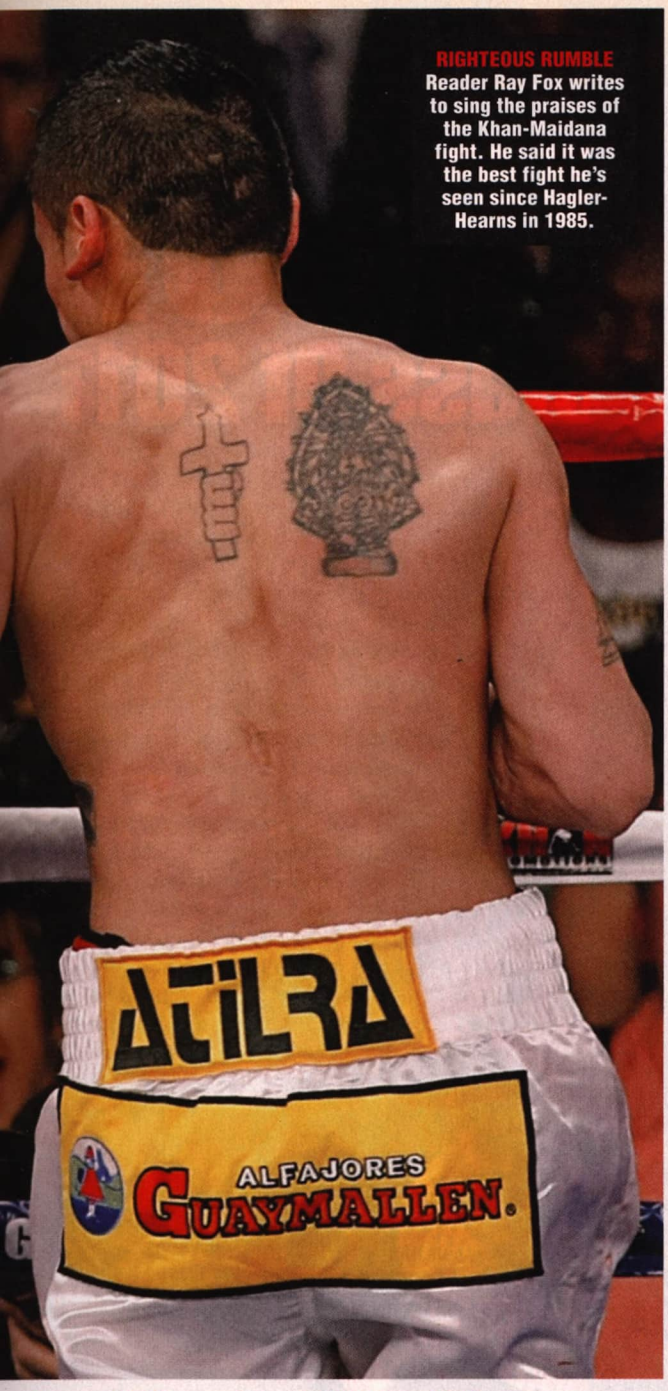
PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Remembering Billy Daniels

Most of us remember that Muhammad Ali had two close calls before winning the heavyweight title from Sonny Liston: He came off the deck to stop Henry Cooper and got a close decision over Doug Jones. However, people might not know or remember that Ali's first scare was against Billy Daniels in 1962. Daniels was ahead before getting stopped on a cut. Whatever happened to Daniels, and what was his final record?

ED SENECA
Harrisburg, PA

Editor's note: Daniels, who was undefeated going into the Ali fight, lost more fights than he won afterward. He had his last fight in 1977, finishing with a record of 23-22-4 (11).



RIGHTEOUS RUMBLE
Reader Ray Fox writes to sing the praises of the Khan-Maidana fight. He said it was the best fight he's seen since Hagler-Hearns in 1985.

Froch Can Go All the Way

I have been following the "Super Six" through all its ups and downs, and I am happy to now predict the winner with four fighters left—Carl Froch. I'm not saying this due to the fact he is a fellow Brit, but because I feel he has shown more than any other fighter in the tournament. Carl showed great desire and mental toughness to defeat a reluctant and tricky Andre Dirrell. He showed us his great stamina and strong chin in a close war with Mikkel Kessler and has now just displayed speed and great boxing ability against Arthur Abraham. I think Froch surprised many experts with how dominant he was over Abraham, and, if he can pull all of these attributes together, he will have more than enough to defeat Glen Johnson and tournament favorite Andre Ward.

DAN COOK
London, UK ■

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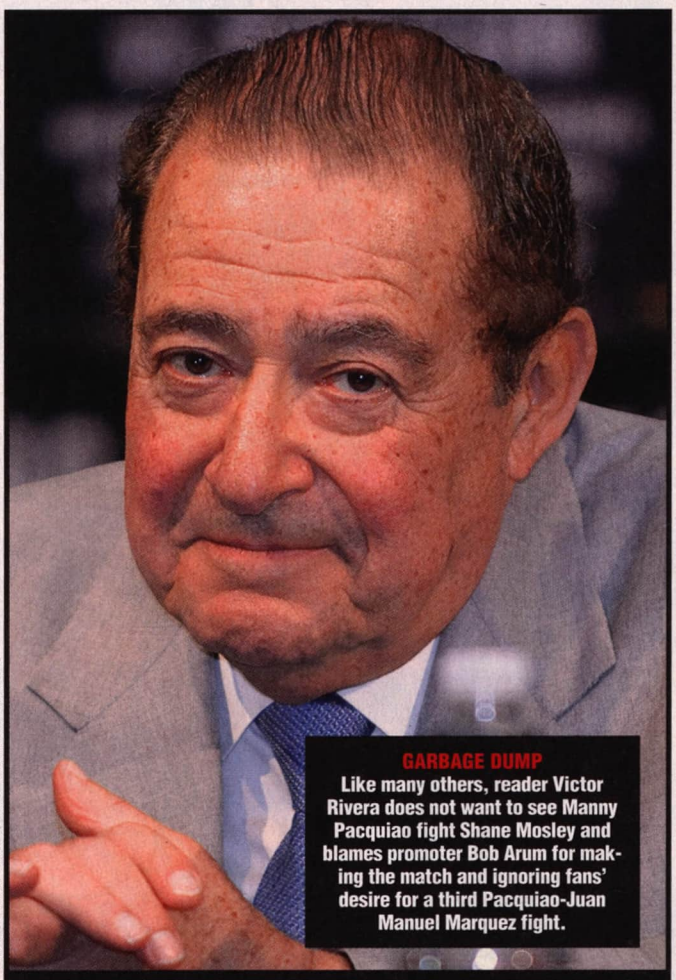


PHOTO BY RAY KASPROWICZ/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

GARBAGE DUMP
Like many others, reader Victor Rivera does not want to see Manny Pacquiao fight Shane Mosley and blames promoter Bob Arum for making the match and ignoring fans' desire for a third Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez fight.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Misguided Matchmaking

Bob Arum says he doesn't care if true boxing fans want a Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez trilogy. He says he cares about the mainstream buying the fight and that casual sports fans don't know who Marquez is. What a slap in the face of everybody reading this! He would rather put on a Pacquiao fight with a way-past-his-prime Shane Mosley than the fight true fans want to see. How are casual fans supposed to become boxing fans when you feed them this garbage?

VICTOR RIVERO
vicrivero22@yahoo.com

The IBHOF Class Of 2011

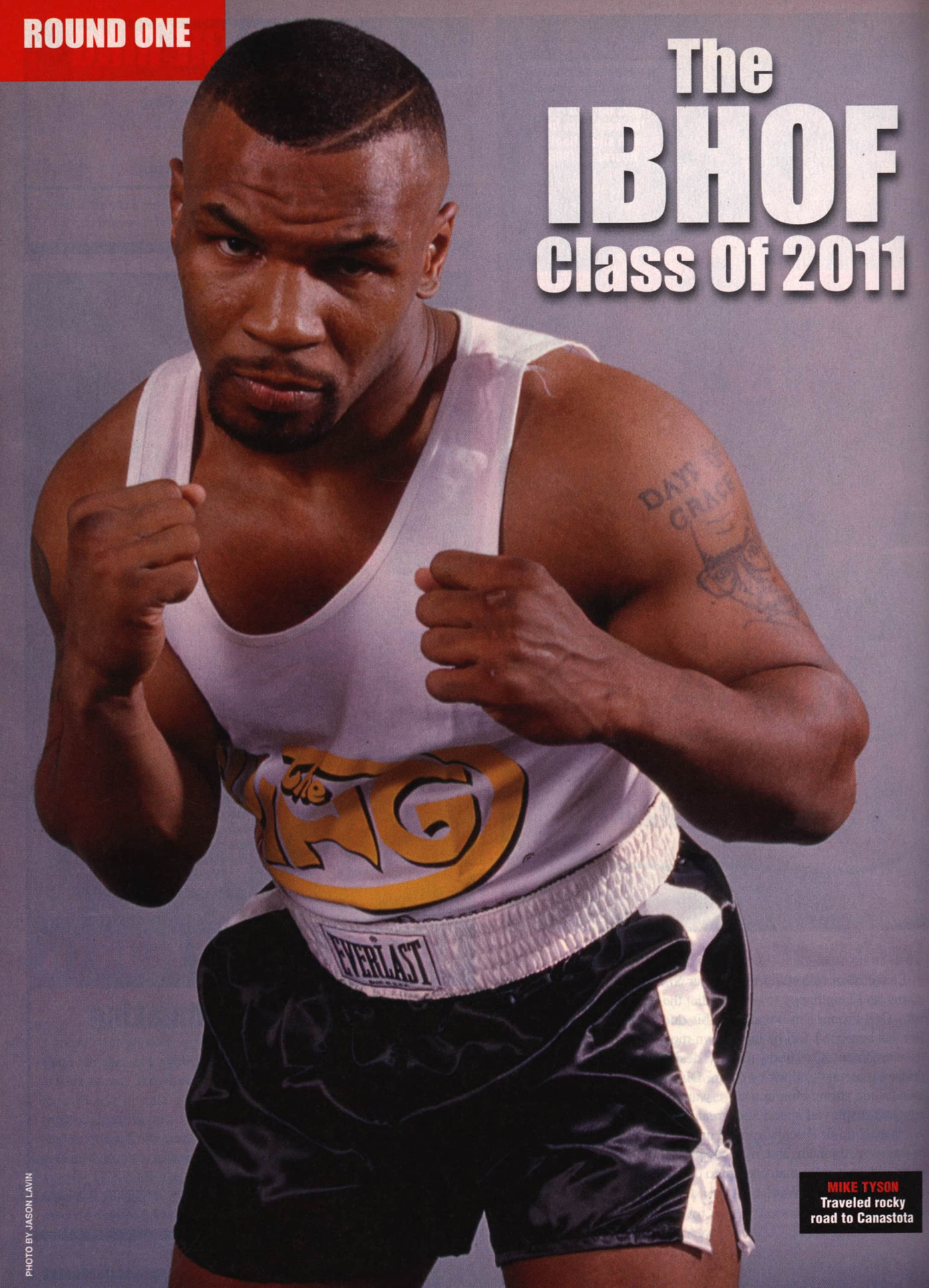


PHOTO BY JASON LAVIN

MIKE TYSON
Traveled rocky road to Canastota

There's bound to be a gigantic turnout the weekend of June 9 through June 12 for the International Boxing Hall of Fame's 22nd annual induction weekend in Canastota, New York. The star-studded affair will feature the trio of **Julio Cesar Chavez**, **Kostya Tszyu**, and **Mike Tyson**, all of whom have been voted into the Modern category their first year of eligibility. Actor and screenwriter **Sylvester Stallone**, whose six *Rocky* movies helped fuel a mainstream resurgence of the sport, will provide an additional splash of glamour, even though his induction was somewhat controversial.

Tszyu, a Russia-born citizen of Australia, was one of the best 140-pounders of all-time. His 31-2 (25) record was compiled against such outstanding fighters as Zab Judah, Sharmba Mitchell, Juan LaPorte, Rafael Gonzalez, Jesse James Leija, Miguel Angel Gonzalez, and fellow inductee Chavez. Tsyzu retired after he lost the world junior welterweight title to Ricky Hatton in June 2005.

Chavez, undoubtedly the most accomplished and popular Mexican fighter in history, won titles at junior lightweight, lightweight, and junior welterweight while compiling a 107-6-2 (86) record. Chavez was THE RING's Fighter of the Year in 1990, the same year his epic battle with Meldrick Taylor was Fight of the Year.

Tyson, an almost instant success due to his ferocious style, murderous punching power, and ominous persona, unified the heavyweight championship and became the best-know heavyweight champ since Muhammad Ali. "Iron Mike" went undefeated until his 38th bout, when Buster Douglas knocked him out in perhaps the biggest upset of all-time. Personal problems and a three-year stint in prison hampered his career, but Tyson, 50-6 (44), retained his popularity right up until his final fight, a TKO loss to Kevin McBride in June 2005. Tyson was THE RING's 1986 Fighter of the Year.

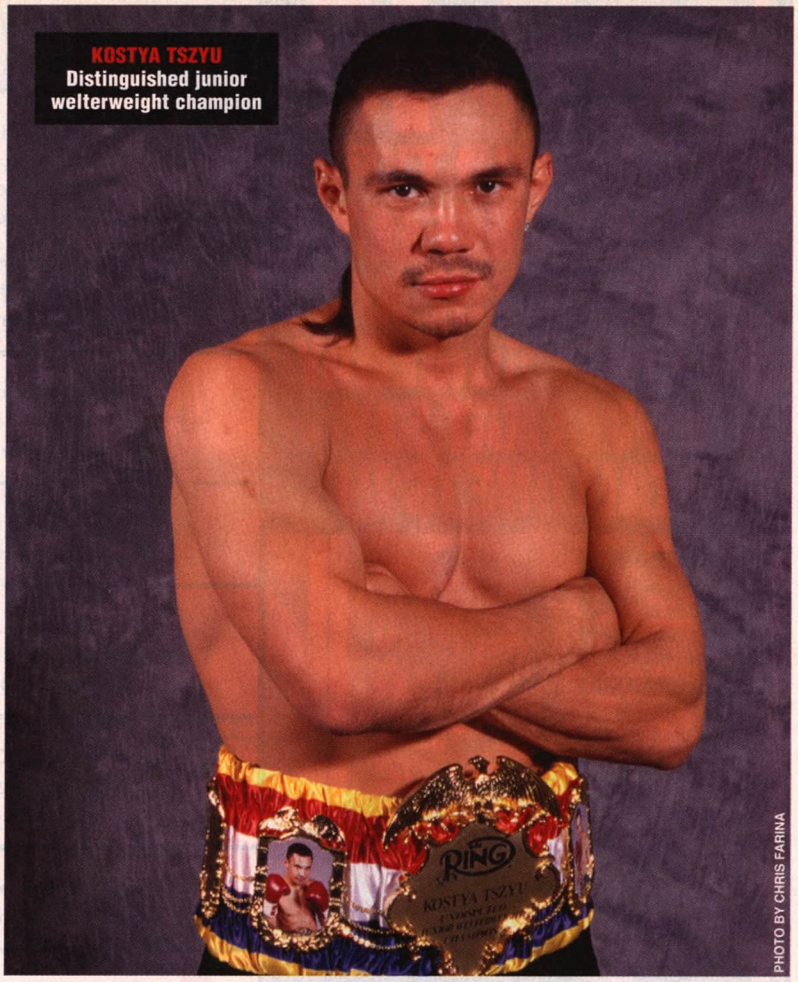
Other living inductees who are expected to be on hand for the weekend are legendary Mexican trainer **Ignacio "Nacho" Beristain** and veteran referee **Joe Cortez.**

Posthumously inductees in the Old-Timer Category are bantamweight title claimant **"Memphis" Pal Moore** (who fought from 1913 until 1933), light heavyweight champion **Jack Root** (who won the 175-pound title in 1903 and is widely considered the first light heavyweight champion of the gloved era), and welterweight/middleweight contender **Dave Shade** (who fought from 1918 until 1935). Shade came up short in three shots at the welterweight title, drawing twice to Jack Britton (D 10, D 15) and losing to Mickey Walker (L 15).

Englishman **John Gully**, who won the bare-knuckle heavyweight championship in 1807 and eventually became a Member of Parliament, will be inducted into the Pioneer category. After quitting the ring, Gully made a fortune racing horses. In a 1975 film version of George MacDonald Fraser's book, *Royal Flash*, Gully was portrayed by British heavyweight Henry Cooper.

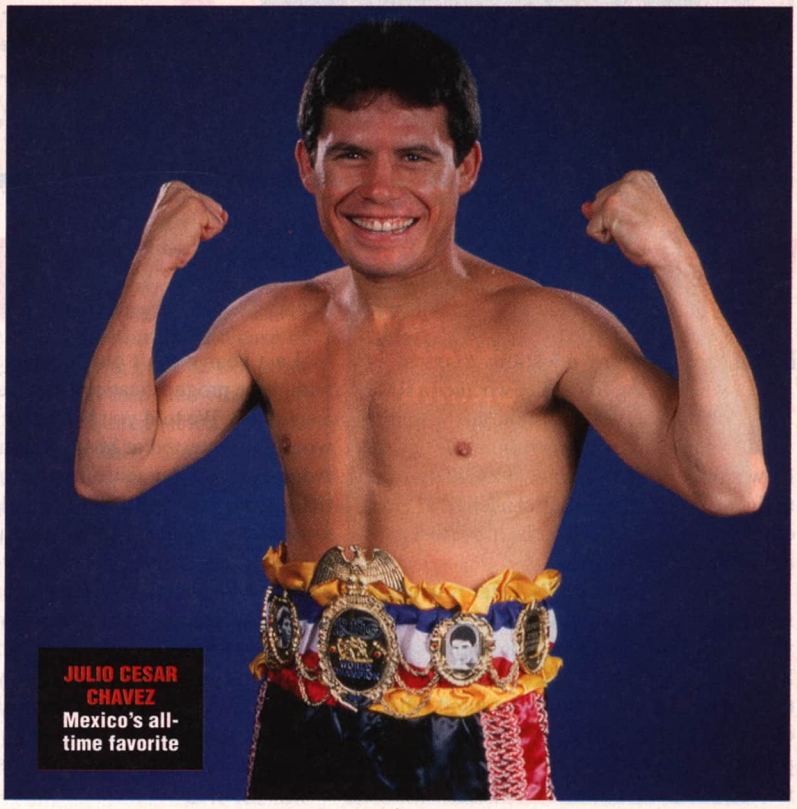
Promoter **A.F. Bettinson** was elected to the Non-Participant category, and British Broadcaster **Harry Carpenter** in the Observer category.

For additional information about Induction Weekend please call the IBHOF at (315) 697-7095 or visit its website at ibhof.com.



KOSTYA TSZYU
Distinguished junior welterweight champion

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA



JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ
Mexico's all-time favorite

TOP 10 HOLLYWOOD TYPES WE CAN EXPECT TO SEE IN THE HALL OF FAME SOMEDAY NOW THAT SLY STALLONE IS IN

WILL SHE JOIN STALLONE? Hilary Swank with her *Million Dollar Baby* Oscar

PHOTO BY SGRANITZ/WIRE IMAGES

1. **Burt Young:** Hey, he appeared in as many *Rocky* movies as Sly did … plus he's up 2-0 on Stallone in appearances on *Walker, Texas Ranger*.
2. **Will Smith:** How is it possible to make Muhammad Ali's life boring? We're not sure, but Smith's *Ali* did it. And that's such an extraordinary achievement the Hall should recognize it.
3. **Tony Danza:** He had a dozen pro fights, plus he hosted the season of *The Contender* that nobody watched. And if you induct him, it just might lure Alyssa Milano to Canastota.
4. **Mickey Rourke:** He was one of Freddie Roach's first superstar fighters! And he's had more plastic surgery than Vinny Paz! Boxing's Hall had better snap him up before pro wrestling's does.
5. **Hilary Swank:** We need more women in the Hall. And despite the evidence presented in *Boys Don't Cry*, we're pretty sure Swank is a woman.
6. **Ving Rhames:** How's this for range: He played Don King in HBO's *Only In America* and then played the heavyweight champ in *Undisputed*. (And he just missed landing the Ricky Schroeder role in *The Champ*.)
7. **Joe Palooka:** Okay, he's just a fictional character. But he held the heavyweight title longer than anyone and had his own lunch box and even a mountain named after him. How could you say no to the original Joe-Pa?
8. **Jason Bateman:** As the star of *Teen Wolf Too*, he popularized boxing among the all-important 18-29 werewolf demographic.
9. **Tommy Morrison:** Ray Mercer and Michael Bentt might think it's not fair, but it's their own fault for not starring as the villain in the worst of all the *Rocky* movies.
10. **Frank Stallone:** Yeah, it's a pity induction, but Frank will take it.

Who Will Stay & Who Will Go?

There are many questions to consider when trying to predict whether a RING champion will still hold his title in a year's time. How vulnerable is he? How strong is his division? How likely is he to fight the most dangerous challengers? How often will he defend? Might he move to another weight class?

With all those variables, there is actually somewhat of a science to predicting who will stay and who will go. Randomness and luck only play a minor role. If you follow all the fighters closely and understand what's on the horizon for them, you're not just flipping a coin when deciding whether they'll stay or go.

Last year wasn't our greatest year ever with these prognostications, but we still went a solid 4-2. We told you Wladimir Klitschko would go untested at heavyweight, Tomasz Adamek would vacate his cruiserweight title, middleweight champ Kelly Pavlik would lose to either Sergio Martinez or Paul Williams, and Manny Pacquiao would abdicate his 140-pound throne. But we trailed off at the end of the article. We thought Juan Manuel Marquez was done with the 135-pound division; he wasn't. And we thought Ivan Calderon could still beat the best at 108; he couldn't.

4-2 isn't a bad record, but we still aim to do better this year. And if we don't, at least you can rest assured we'll blame it on inexact science, not bad luck.

Wladimir Klitschko (heavyweight): Unless he's about to become injury prone like his brother did around the same age—and we don't think one random torn abdominal muscle should really raise eyebrows—there's no reason Klitschko's dominant reign shouldn't continue. Is there anyone out there who would be better than a 5-1 underdog? *Maybe* David Haye. But he only becomes a live dog if he stops running away from the fight. **Prognosis: Stay**

Jean Pascal (light heavyweight): It's hard to know what to make of Pascal after he exceeded expectations against Chad Dawson

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHT WIRE IMAGES

MIDDLEWEIGHT KING
How long can Martinez keep his crown?

then underperformed against Bernard Hopkins. But we know his next fight will be a rematch with one of those two, and we'd give either challenger a solid shot at dethroning him. And if Pascal does turn away one of them, his reward is probably a tough defense against the other later in 2011. **Prognosis: Go**

Sergio Martinez (middleweight): "Maravilla" just got done erasing the two biggest threats to beat him at 160 pounds, so if he could get through 2010 unscathed, 2011 should be easy. From Felix Sturm to Sebastian Zbik, the middleweight class is loaded with guys who simply aren't on Martinez' level. And the same goes for junior middles like Miguel Cotto. As for a certain Filipino welterweight, don't count on it happening. **Prognosis: Stay**

Juan Manuel Marquez (lightweight): Yes, he's 37, and yes, he's getting easier and easier to hit. But Marquez is in a division without any other great fighters. And some of the better ones—Humberto Soto, Brandon Rios, Urbano Antillon, Miguel Vazquez—are being matched against each other instead of Marquez because of the Golden Boy-Top Rank issues. We don't feel comfortable guaranteeing Marquez two more years on top, but one more seems likely. **Prognosis: Stay**

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (flyweight): The Thai veteran reclaiming his throne against Koki Kameda at age 32 was a nice story, but it might turn out to be a case of an aging fighter pulling out one last great performance. At least that's the vibe given off by Pongsaklek's unexpected struggle against Suriyan Por Chockchai in his first defense. His mandatory challenger is the dangerous Edgar Sosa, and, if Sosa doesn't trip up Pongsaklek, someone else will. **Prognosis: Go**

Giovani Segura (junior flyweight): This is the surest bet on the list. Segura has expressed that making 108 pounds is just about impossible and there isn't exactly a million-dollar mega-fight out there to make him change his mind. Expect him to vacate the title by the middle of 2011. **Prognosis: Go**

—Eric Raskin

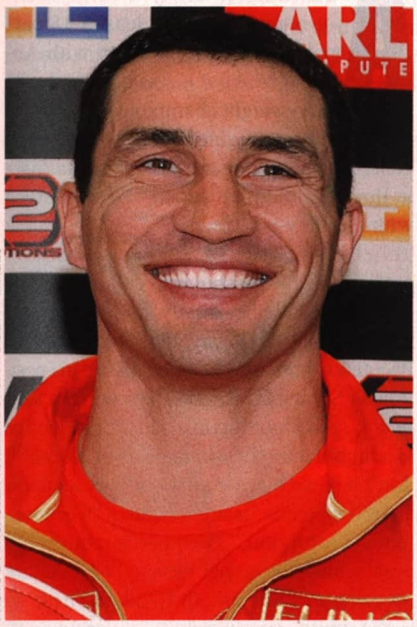


PHOTO BY THORSTEN WAGNER/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

THE HAPPY CHAMP
Will Wladimir still be smiling this time next year?

A Sordid Affair

MARITAL MAYHEM
Jim and Christy Martin in 1996

PHOTO BY JAY LASH

Women's boxing pioneer Christy Martin spent most of late November and early December in Florida Hospital North recovering from gunshot and stab wounds. The revelation that her husband had attacked her resulted in a week-long manhunt, ending when Orange County deputies confronted James Martin in a bizarre showdown not far from the couple's home in Apopka, Florida.

The story began two days before Thanksgiving when a friend of the Martins placed a call to the Orange County Sheriff's Office claiming Martin's husband was acting suicidal. Deputies visited the Martins' residence but found no reason to take James into custody. Later that evening, Christy ran into the street bleeding from wounds to her torso and left leg. She flagged down a passing motorist and was taken to the hospital, where she told authorities that James had assaulted her after learning she was leaving him for a woman.

Meanwhile, 66-year-old James was on the lam. There was speculation that he was part of a reported burglary of the Martins' home after the attack, but James, who'd undergone heart surgery four months earlier, seemed to have vanished.

The Martins were familiar to most boxing fans. Under James' guidance, Christy was the first female boxer to achieve mainstream success, appearing on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* in 1996, acting on *Roseanne,* and fighting on several high-profile boxing shows. In recent years, though, the 42-year-old fighter was unhappy with her career and the general direction of women's boxing in America.

Although the Martins operated a boxing gym and presented an upbeat image to the public, sources close to the couple claim they constantly argued over money as well as Christy's blossoming romance with longtime friend, Sherry Lusk. James had recently followed the two women on a trip to Daytona Beach. Ms. Lusk told the Orlando media that James was "threatening to ruin Christy's career and name for a long time" by posting incriminating footage of the ladies on YouTube. Christy was on the phone with Ms. Lusk when the attack took place.

Seven days later, Orange County deputies acted on a tip and found James in a wooded area less than a quarter mile from the Martins' home address. He'd been hiding in a neighbor's shed, occasionally sneaking into the neighbor's home to shower and eat.

When the deputies closed in, James appeared ready for a standoff.

"At the time he was challenged, he was holding a knife," Lt. Paul Yoast told Central Florida News 13. "It was quite bloody." James initially refused to drop the knife, but eventually cooperated. "It looked like he had fresh stomach wounds from that particular knife," Yoast said.

The deputies brought Martin to Orlando Regional Medical Center and then to Orange County Jail where he was denied bond. At press time, he was facing charges of attempted first-degree murder and aggravated battery with a deadly weapon.

—Don Stradley

BOXING

The long-overdue Gene Tunney renaissance launched in 2006 with the publication of Jack Cavanaugh's major biography, *Tunney: Boxing's Brainiest Champ And His Upset Of The Great Jack Dempsey*, now comes to full flower with a very personal, revealing portrait of the former heavyweight champion by his son, Jay R. Tunney, called *The Prizefighter And The Playwright: Gene Tunney And Bernard Shaw* (Firefly Books, 288 pages, hardcover, $35).

While the central focus of Jay Tunney's book is the father-son-like relationship of "The Fighting Marine" and the Nobel-laureate writer/philosopher who was fascinated by boxing himself and drawn to the yearning Tunney's intellect that boxing writers famously scorned, its revelations about the bookish, introspective champion's personality, character, and faith are plentiful and poignant.

There's lots of good boxing stuff too, including a very absorbing look at the "Battle of the Long Count."

Outside

According to HBO, **Manny Pacquiao**, who sold at least 1.15 pay-per-views for his match with **Antonio Margarito**, is now tied with former heavyweight champion **Mike Tyson** as the only two fighters in PPV history to generate at least one million buys for a fight in three consecutive years. "We're thrilled with the PPV performance," HBO's **Mark Taffet** told ESPN.com. "[Pacquiao] has generated 5.1 million buys over his last five fights." Meanwhile, shortly after returning to the Philippines following the Margarito fight, Pacquiao, who appears to be taking his position as Sarangani Representative very seriously, spoke out against the Reproductive Health bill, currently in the Lower House. "I don't believe that we are poor because there are more people," said Pacquiao. "The problem is corruption." Pacquiao's mother, **Dionisia**, also voiced her views: "Why control procreation?" she asked. "God told us to go to the world and multiply" … World heavyweight champion **Wladimir Klitschko** pulled out of his defense against **Derek**

BOOKSHELF

Decades after the publication of Shaw's boxing novel, *Cashel Byron's Profession*, Gene Tunney was its hero come to life. "I think of pugilism as a fencing bout of gloved fists rather than an act of assault and battery," said the winner of all but one of his 86 professional bouts who studied texts about human anatomy to figure out his best line of attack and ran five miles backwards in training to enhance his balance and footwork.

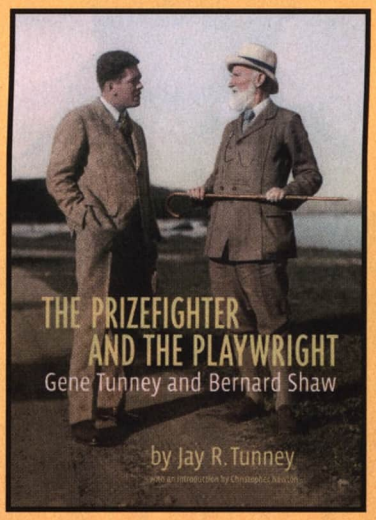
After Tunney realized his full potential as a boxer—being called a "fighter" made him cringe—by winning and twice defending the greatest title in sports, he wanted more than anything to "prove that he could remake himself, that he wasn't a person who affected a manner of culture just to impress others. He yearned to contribute to society, and he longed for the kind of lasting respectability that would come from being accepted by those he emulated" such as Shaw. "More than he wanted to admit, the barbs of the press had stung, wounding him deeply, and he saw a higher purpose in creating a personal life of achievement."

Thus, there was a kinship with Shaw, with whom Tunney apparently spent as much time on his honeymoon as with Mrs. Tunney. The account of a medical crisis and its denouement that fundamentally touched their relationship and even spirituality is effectively and affectingly told.

Clean Gene wasn't perfect. His idea of a great practical joke: "He once shut up a boorish member of a fishing party in the Bahamas by having a cable sent to the man saying that there had been a fire at his house in New York." Sounds about as hilarious as a kick in the jewels. But it is impossible not to admire and feel affection for the great boxer whose feats speak for themselves and the sensitive man who called his youngest son—the author—"Giant" because his older brothers called him "Shrimp."

Sixty-nine rare photographs further enhance this impressive book.

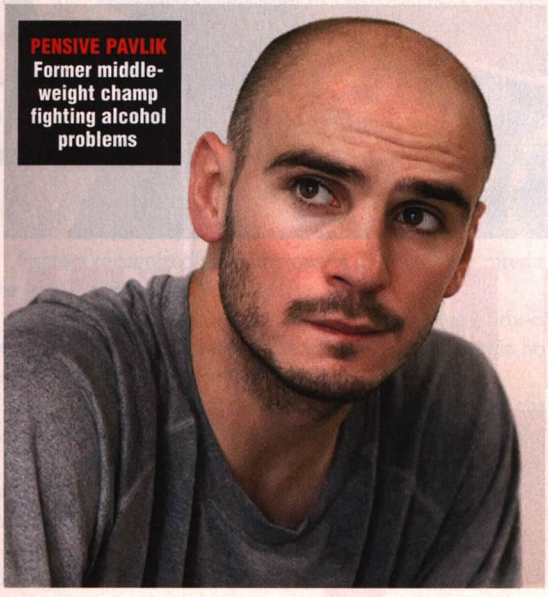
—Pete Ehrmann



THE PRIZEFIGHTER AND THE PLAYWRIGHT: GENE TUNNEY AND BERNARD SHAW
By Jay R. Tunney
Firefly Books, hardcover
288 pages, $35.00

The Ropes

Chisora four days before their scheduled December 12 bout because of a torn abdominal muscle suffered hitting the pad … Former middleweight champion **Kelly Pavlik** checked into the Betty Ford Center in Rancho Mirage, California, on November 4, seeking help for an alcohol problem. Pavlik's co-manager, **Cameron Dunkin**, said that Pavlik intends to stay in treatment for as long as necessary. "Three months, six month, whatever it takes, he's going to do it" … **Ricky Hatton** has settled a claim with his former trainer, **Billy Graham**, for unpaid wages. Both parties reached an undisclosed but mutually acceptable deal on the third day of hearings at Manchester Civil Justice Centre … Former British and European heavyweight titleholder **Matt Skelton**, 43, was sentenced to a five-month term for attempting to pervert the course of justice. The court was told that Skelton had on three occasions falsely named "Brian Wilson" as the driver when faced with a speeding fine. "I take the view that you committed these offenses because, in your view of your own status, you were above the law," said Judge **Gareth Hawkesworth** when handing down the sentence.



PENSIVE PAVLIK
Former middleweight champ fighting alcohol problems

PHOTO BY GARY SARTI/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

OBITUARIES

Henrietta King, who had been married to promoter **Don King** for almost 50 years, died on December 2 following a lengthy illness. She was 87 … On his way back from his wife's funeral in Cleveland, King was stopped by security at Hopkins Airport for having live ammunition in his carry-on luggage. The Transportation Safety Administration took the ammunition away from King and allowed him to continue his trip to Florida … Former light heavyweight **Danny Nardico**, 85, died on November 22 in Florida. Nardico is best remembered for his December 1952 seventh-round TKO victory over **Jake LaMotta**. Nardico tallied an overall record of 50-13-4 (35) in a career that began in August 1949 and ended in June '54.

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ

It was a packed 30-day period with no shortage of Fighter of the Month-worthy performances. But while Joseph Agbeko, Carl Froch, Abner Mares, Amir Khan, Hozumi Hasegawa, Nonito Donaire, and other stars sparkled, none shone quite as brightly during the month as lightweight champ Juan Manuel Marquez.

A few key factors give Marquez the edge for Fighter of the Month honors. First was the significance of his bout with Michael Katsidis—it was a matchup that pitted the world's top two fighters at 135 pounds, with Katsidis having posted four-straight impressive wins. Next was what transpired in the fight itself: Marquez came back from a knockdown to break down and beat up Katsidis before Kenny Bayless stopped it in the ninth round of an action-packed affair that wasn't quite a fight of the year, but was certainly fun while it lasted.

Throw in the fact that the 37-year-old Marquez continues to defy his age, and it was clear that Marquez deserved the nod in a crowded field of contenders this month. After his one-sided loss to a much larger Floyd Mayweather in 2009, Marquez has bounced back with two straight impressive wins at lightweight to set up what could be a bright 2011 for the Mexican star.

RATINGS ANALYSIS

For Period Ended December 19, 2010

Heavyweights: No changes.

Cruiserweights: Denis Lebedev (fifth last issue) switches places with Troy Ross (fourth last issue), moving to four due to his strong showing against number-two contender Marco Huck.

Light Heavyweights: Bernard Hopkins (fourth last issue) jumps to the number-one slot thanks to his excellent performance in the controversial 12-round draw with world champion Jean Pascal. Chad Dawson (first last issue) drops to three, and Glen Johnson (third last issue) dips to four because of the realignment.

Super Middleweights: No changes.

Middleweights: No changes.

Junior Middleweights: No changes.

Welterweights: No changes.

Junior Welterweights: Paul Malignaggi (eighth last issue) exits to fight at welterweight. With Malignaggi leaving, Lamont Peterson (ninth last issue) moves to eight, while Victor Ortiz enters at nine because of his draw with Peterson.

Lightweights: No changes.

Junior Lightweights: No changes.

Featherweights: No changes.

Junior Featherweights: No changes.

Bantamweights: Joseph Agbeko (fifth last issue) advances to three following his surprisingly dominating decision over Yonnhy Perez (third last issue), who falls to six. Perez' demotion pushes everyone six and below down one notch, as Nonito Donaire, now campaigning at bantamweight, enters at five. Vic Darchinyan debuts at 10, which pushes out Malcolm Tunacao (ninth last issue) and Volodumyr Sydorenko (10th last issue).

Junior Bantamweights: Vic Darchinyan (first last issue) and Nonito Donaire (fourth last issue) each depart to fight at bantamweight. Darchinyan's departure elevates Hugo Cazares to the top spot and Nobuo Nashiro (third last issue) to two. Donaire's exit allows everyone rated five and below to move up one place each. Cristain Mijares enters at seven, powered by his decision over Juan Alberto Rosas, who falls from nine to 10. Cesar Seda (10th last issue) jumps to eight and Yota Sato debuts at nine.

Flyweights: No changes.

Junior Flyweights: No changes.

Strawweights: No changes.

Pound-for-Pound: No changes.

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at ringtv.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com.

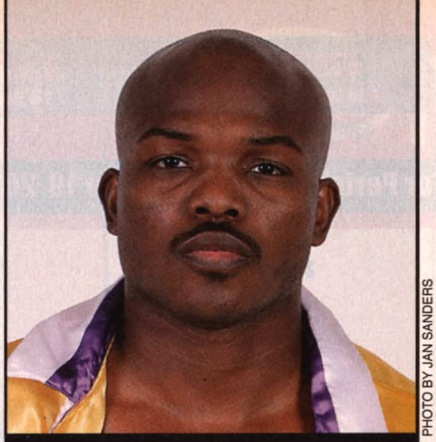


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

POUND FOR POUND

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO** *Welterweight*
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** *Welterweight*
3. **SERGIO MARTINEZ** *Middleweight*
4. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** *Lightweight*
5. **NONITO DONAIRE** *Bantamweight*
6. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM** *Flyweight*
7. **FERNANDO MONTIEL** *Bantamweight*
8. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** *Heavyweight*
9. **TIM BRADLEY** *Junior Welterweight/ Welterweight*
10. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ** *Featherweight*

The RING RATINGS

For Period Ended December 19, 2010

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to ringtv.com

NOT THAT OLD Bernard Hopkins is the number-one light heavyweight again after his controversial 12-round draw against Jean Pascal

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 55-3 (49)

1. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 41-2 (38)
2. **DAVID HAYE**
England 25-1 (23)
3. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia 21-0 (15)
4. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 43-1 (28)
5. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
Uzbekistan 26-1-1 (17)
6. **EDDIE CHAMBERS**
Philadelphia, PA 35-2 (18)
7. **DENIS BOYTSOV**
Russia 27-0 (22)
8. **NICOLAY VALUEV**
Russia 50-2 (34)
9. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO**
Ukraine 30-1 (20)
10. **CHRIS ARREOLA**
Riverside, CA 29-2 (25)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 23-2 (12)
2. **MARCO HUCK**
Yugoslavia 31-1 (23)
3. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 44-2-1 (32)
4. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
Russia 21-1 (16)
5. **TROY ROSS**
Canada 24-2 (16)
6. **DANNY GREEN**
Australia 31-3 (27)
7. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**
Italy 27-3-1 (11)
8. **OLA AFOLABI**
England 15-2-3 (6)
9. **PAWEL KOLODZIEJ**
Poland 27-0 (16)
10. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama 37-3-2 (29)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: JEAN PASCAL
Haiti 26-1-1 (16)

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
Philadelphia, PA 51-5-2 (32)
2. **TAVORIS CLOUD**
Tallahassee, FL 22-0 (18)
3. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 29-1 (17)
4. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 51-14-2 (35)
5. **NATHAN CLEVERLY**
Wales 21-0 (10)
6. **ADRIAN DIACONU**
Romania 27-2 (15)
7. **KARO MURAT**
Iraq 22-1 (13)
8. **BEIBUT SHUMENOV**
Kazakhstan 10-1 (6)
9. **CHRIS HENRY**
Houston, TX 25-2 (20)
10. **GABRIEL CAMPILLO**
Spain 20-3 (7)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ANDRE WARD**
Oakland, CA 23-0 (13)
2. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Romania 27-0 (22)
3. **CARL FROCH**
England 27-1 (21)
4. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 43-2 (32)
5. **ANDRE DIRRELL**
Flint, MI 19-1 (13)
6. **SAKIO BIKA**
Cameroon 28-5-2 (19)
7. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
Germany 39-2 (23)
8. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 29-3 (22)
9. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 51-14-2 (35)
10. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Armenia 31-2 (25)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: SERGIO MARTINEZ
Argentina 46-2-2 (25)

1. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 34-2-1 (14)
2. **KELLY PAVLIK**
Youngstown, OH 36-2 (32)
3. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 34-3-1 (16)
4. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
Augusta, GA 39-2 (27)
5. **DANIEL GEALE**
Australia 24-1 (15)
6. **MATTHEW MACKLIN**
England 28-2 (19)
7. **SEBASTIAN ZBIK**
Germany 30-0 (10)
8. **DMITRY PIROG**
Russia 17-0 (14)
9. **DAVID LOPEZ**
Mexico 39-12 (23)
10. **HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM**
France 25-0 (17)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **KERMIT CINTRON**
   Reading, PA 32-3-1 (28)
2. **ALFREDO ANGULO**
   Mexico 19-1 (16)
3. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 35-2 (28)
4. **RYAN RHODES**
   England 45-4 (31)
5. **SECHEW POWELL**
   Brooklyn, NY 26-2 (15)
6. **YURI FOREMAN**
   Belarus 28-1 (8)
7. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
   Armenia 28-0 (17)
8. **SERGIY DZINZIRUK**
   Ukraine 37-0 (23)
9. **CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE**
   Detroit, MI 30-4 (18)
10. **SAUL ALVAREZ**
    Mexico 35-0-1 (26)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Philippines 52-3-2 (38)
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 41-0 (25)
3. **ANDRE BERTO**
   Winter Haven, FL 27-0 (21)
4. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 35-2 (28)
5. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 46-6-1 (39)
6. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY**
   Ghana 35-4 (20)
7. **JAN ZAVECK**
   Slovenia 30-1 (17)
8. **VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO**
   Ukraine 31-0 (20)
9. **RAFAL JACKIEWICZ**
   Poland 36-9-1 (18)
10. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
    Palm Springs, CA 26-0 (11)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   Palm Springs, CA 26-0 (11)
2. **AMIR KHAN**
   England 24-1 (17)
3. **DEVON ALEXANDER**
   St. Louis, MO 21-0 (13)
4. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
   Argentina 29-2 (27)
5. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK**
   Ukraine 31-4-1 (13)
6. **JUAN URANGO**
   Colombia 22-3-1 (17)
7. **KAIZER MABUZA**
   South Africa 23-6-3 (14)
8. **LAMONT PETERSON**
   Washington, D.C. 28-1-1 (14)
9. **VICTOR ORTIZ**
   Garden City, KN 28-2-2 (22)
10. **PAUL MCCLOSKEY**
    England 22-0 (12)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
Mexico 52-5-1 (38)

1. **MIGUEL ACOSTA**
   Venezuela 27-8-2 (21)
2. **HUMBERTO SOTO**
   Mexico 54-7-2 (32)
3. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS**
   Australia 27-3 (22)
4. **ALI FUNEKA**
   South Africa 30-3-3 (25)
5. **BRANDON RIOS**
   Lubbock, TX 26-0-1 (19)
6. **JOHN MURRAY**
   England 30-0 (18)
7. **PAULUS MOSES**
   Namibia 26-1 (18)
8. **URBANO ANTILLON**
   Mexico 28-2 (20)
9. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
   Mexico 27-3 (12)
10. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
    Gilroy, CA 28-1-1 (18)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MZONKE FANA**
   South Africa 30-4 (12)
2. **RICKY BURNS**
   Scotland 30-2 (7)
3. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
   Puerto Rico 24-1-1 (15)
4. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
   Japan 16-0 (13)
5. **JORGE SOLIS**
   Mexico 40-2-2 (29)
6. **JUAN CARLOS SALGADO**
   Mexico 22-1-1 (16)
7. **JORGE LINARES**
   Venezuela 30-1 (19)
8. **TAKAHIRO AO**
   Japan 20-2-1 (9)
9. **ARGENIS MENDEZ**
   Dominican Republic 17-1 (9)
10. **JASON LITZAU**
    St. Paul, MN 28-2 (21)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
   Puerto Rico 30-0 (27)
2. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
   Cuba 19-0 (15)
3. **CHRIS JOHN**
   Indonesia 44-0-2 (22)
4. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
   Mexico 34-11-2 (22)
5. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON**
   Mexico 41-2 (34)
6. **CRISTOBAL CRUZ**
   Mexico 39-12-2 (23)
7. **ELIO ROJAS**
   Dominican Republic 22-1 (13)
8. **BERNABE CONCEPCION**
   Philippines 28-4-1 (15)
9. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico 39-6 (35)
10. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA**
    Japan 29-3 (12)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
   Japan 37-4-3 (23)
2. **ROY LI LEE**
   Japan 17-1-1 (8)
3. **POONSAWAT KRATINGDAENGGYM**
   Thailand 41-2 (29)
4. **STEVE MOLITOR**
   Canada 33-1 (12)
5. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
   Cuba 7-0 (5)
6. **RICARDO CORDOBA**
   Panama 37-3-2 (23)
7. **TAKALANI NDLOVU**
   South Africa 31-6 (18)
8. **JEFF MATHEBULA**
   South Africa 24-3-2 (14)
9. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.**
   Puerto Rico 20-0-1 (17)
10. **RENDALL MUNROE**
    England 21-2 (9)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 44-2-2 (34)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO**
   Panama 30-1-1 (10)
3. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
   Ghana 28-2 (22)
4. **ABNER MARES**
   Mexico 21-0-1 (13)
5. **NONITO DONAIRE**
   Philippines 25-1 (17)
6. **YONNHY PEREZ**
   Colombia 20-1-1 (14)
7. **NEHOMAR CERMENO**
   Venezuela 19-2 (11)
8. **SASHA BAKHTIN**
   Russia 25-0 (11)
9. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 43-2 (21)
10. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
    Armenia 35-3-1 (27)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **HUGO CAZARES**
   Mexico 33-6-2 (24)
2. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
   Japan 14-2-1 (9)
3. **TOMAS ROJAS**
   Mexico 34-12-1 (23)
4. **KOHEI KONO**
   Japan 25-5 (9)
5. **DRIAN FRANCISCO**
   Philippines 19-0-1 (15)
6. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 32-0-2 (19)
7. **CRISTIAN MIJARES**
   Mexico 41-6-2 (18)
8. **CESAR SEDA**
   Puerto Rico 20-0 (15)
9. **YOTA SATO**
   Japan 20-2-1 (11)
10. **JUAN ALBERTO ROSAS**
    Mexico 32-6 (26)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM
Thailand 77-3-1 (41)

1. **KOKI KAMEDA**
   Japan 23-1 (15)
2. **DAISUKE NAITO**
   Japan 36-3-3 (23)
3. **DAIKI KAMEDA**
   Japan 18-2 (11)
4. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
   Panama 22-1 (17)
5. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
   Japan 36-6-2 (17)
6. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT**
   Thailand 50-3-1 (20)
7. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
   South Africa 26-2 (17)
8. **JULIO CESAR MIRANDA**
   Mexico 34-5-1 (27)
9. **ROCKY FUENTES**
   Philippines 28-6-2 (18)
10. **MILAN MELINDO**
    Philippines 23-0 (7)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: GIOVANI SEGURA
Mexico 26-1-1 (22)

1. **IVAN CALDERON**
   Puerto Rico 34-1-1 (6)
2. **GILBERTO KEB BAAS**
   Mexico 34-20-4 (21)
3. **OMAR NINO**
   Mexico 30-4-2 (12)
4. **RODEL MAYOL**
   Philippines 27-5-2 (21)
5. **LUIS ALBERTO LAZARTE**
   Argentina 48-9-2 (18)
6. **CARLOS TAMARA**
   Colombia 21-6 (15)
7. **BRIAN VILORIA**
   Waipahu, HI 28-3 (16)
8. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico 32-2-3 (21)
9. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
   Argentina 25-1 (15)
10. **RAMON GARCIA HIRALES**
    Mexico 15-1-1 (8)

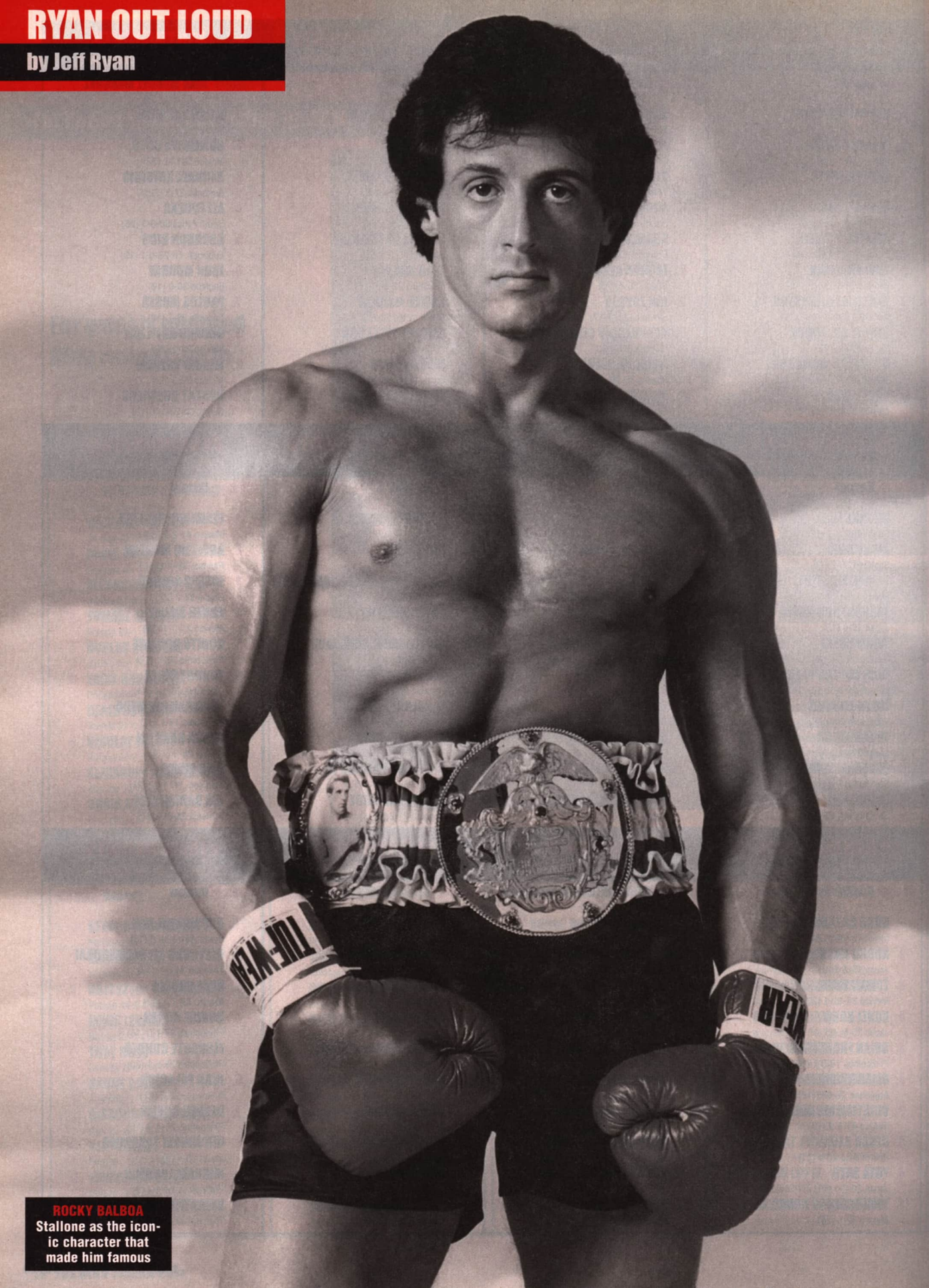
STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
   South Africa 21-0 (15)
2. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
   Thailand 34-0-1 (12)
3. **RAUL GARCIA**
   Mexico 29-1-1 (17)
4. **DONNIE NIETES**
   Philippines 27-1-3 (15)
5. **FLORANTE CONDES**
   Philippines 23-5-1 (20)
6. **JUAN PALACIOS**
   Nicaragua 26-3 (21)
7. **DENVER CUELLO**
   Philippines 25-4-6 (15)
8. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
   Japan 23-4 (9)
9. **MICHAEL LANDERO**
   Philippines 14-4-4 (4)
10. **KWANTHAI SITHMORSENG**
    Thailand 31-0-1 (17)

RYAN OUT LOUD

by Jeff Ryan



ROCKY BALBOA
Stallone as the iconic character that made him famous

He Didn't Get In On The Sly

Groucho Marx had just finished his dinner in a New York restaurant, the story goes, when a waiter approached the table and asked him, "How did you find your steak, sir?" Marx, who like a prime Joe Louis never failed to take advantage of an opening, replied, "Quite by accident, actually. I moved the slice of tomato and there it was, underneath."

When it comes to finding boxing news to comment on these days, the mainstream media in this country is more Groucho Marx than Bob Woodward. There are few muckraking dinosaurs on a full-time fight beat anymore, but plenty of newspaper columnists, radio hosts, and ESPN multisport blowhards whose method of uncovering boxing stories is to sit in their newsroom cubicles, behind their radio microphones or at their anchor desks, clear off their laps, and wait for something to fall into them quite by accident.

Well, lo and behold, in December something did. When they took a moment to finally look up from their stacks of wire copy on Cliff Lee's tedious contract negotiations, Brett Favre's tiresome injury updates, and the mind-numbing 24/7 analysis of how LeBron James is adjusting to his new playmates, the keyboard players and talking heads were actually reminded of boxing's existence. Not surprisingly, it wasn't Fight of the Year candidate Amir Khan-Marcos Maidana or the defeat of Vic Darchinyan that got their attention. It was the induction of Sylvester Stallone into the International Boxing Hall of Fame. A case of reel life meeting real life. Yo, Adrian Diaconu!

Suddenly, boxing was a hot topic on the local 11 p.m. sportscasts and on the radio dial, two places it only gets mentioned a couple of times a year. Guys who don't even know what a weigh-in is were weighing in on Stallone's worthiness. And, for the most part, they believed a huge injustice had taken place. Phil Mushnick, *The New York Post*'s media critic, even felt it necessary to remind the voters that, hey, *Rocky* was a *movie*.

Reading stuff like that makes me want to cry out, "Cut me, Mick!" *Across the wrists!* What Mushnick and others sharing his opinion don't seem to grasp is that it's *Sylvester Stallone* who is being honored in Canastota, not Rocky Balboa. And Stallone *should* get his recognition. His creation of the Rocky Balboa character, first in an original screenplay, and then on film, was a godsend for the Sweet Science.

The release of *Rocky* (an eventual Academy Award winner for Best Picture) in December 1976, along with the performance of the five U.S. gold medalists at the Montreal Olympics earlier that year, was a one-two combination that boosted the sport at a time when the real heavyweight king, Muhammad Ali, was in obvious decline and the lighter-weight classes were short on star power and intriguing storylines.

Stallone's script may have been heavy on the clichés, but it made audiences appreciate the work ethic, toughness, savagery, pride, and courage that make up a professional fighter. The movie took us inside the life of a boxer, a place we never really got to go while watching those Saturday afternoon bouts on ABC, CBS, and NBC. We saw how confidence and self-doubt often duel inside a fighter's head in a brutal battle worthy of semi-main event status. It wasn't just Rocky who'd impressed us with his tenacity and heart by the end of the movie, but Apollo Creed too.

Stallone had people not just running to the theaters but also running out of them. One athletic kid in Cranston, Rhode Island, Vinny Pazienza, raced out the doors and down the street with the strains of "Gonna Fly Now" still ringing in his ears. Right then and there he decided to give boxing a try, eventually becoming a tireless, fearless, blood-dripping "Italian Stallion" himself. How many more Pazienzas took to a gym because of Stallone? Even if they didn't make it as far as Paz did, many of them no doubt got in better shape, built up their self-esteem, and learned to protect themselves. How many people have "Gonna Fly Now" on their iPods when they run? (My hand is up.) How many locals have recreated Rocky's charge up the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art? How many people will never forget the sight of Rocky drinking raw eggs or ripping his punches into the sides of beef hanging in a slaughterhouse?

How much did Stallone's character mean to "The City Of Brotherly Love"? Well, it's a statue of Rocky Balboa, not Joe Frazier, Matthew Saad Muhammad, or "Bad" Bennie Briscoe that currently stands outside the museum and once resided in front of The Spectrum. It didn't matter that *Rocky* showed us a Philly of grit, grime, loan sharking, abattoirs, and fires in trashcans keeping street people warm. We'd seen enough of Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell to last a lifetime. Rocky's reality was more than welcome.

Halls of fame are full of non-participants, observers, contributors, or whatever you choose to call them, and their inclusion often invites debate. (Did you know that *Peanuts* cartoonist Charles M. Schulz is in the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame as a result of his owning an ice rink and establishing some senior hockey tournaments? Or that Converse salesman Chuck Taylor made the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame primarily because he developed a basketball shoe that later bore his name?) One can make the case that Stallone is more deserving of the IBHOF than some *fighters* are (Barry McGuigan, Billy Soose).

Of course, just try telling that to the "experts" sitting around an ESPN roundtable. If it wasn't Stallone who was sparking discussion about this year's class of Hall of Farmers, then it was his fellow inductee, Mike Tyson. Skip "Doing the Research" Bayless, another of an endless string of ESPN, *ahem*, talent with weird hair and an uninformed opinion on everything, polluted the air while explaining to us little people how Tyson didn't deserve the call to Canastota because he beat nothing but "bums." Shock of shocks: Bayless didn't bother commenting on Kostya Tszyu's induction, no doubt because he never even heard of the guy.

Boxing always owed Sylvester Stallone some kind of thank you for his gift to a sport that he has always adored. Enshrinement in June will be that expression of gratitude. What would make the day a real hoot would be if old Sly, while standing at the podium to make his speech, looked up toward the sky where his late co-star Burgess Meredith resides today, and mumbled in Rocky Balboa's voice, "Yeah, I got a Hall of Fame plaque, but I ain't got no locker, do I, Mick?" ■

CELLULOID SLUGFEST
Stallone and Carl Weathers (as Apollo Creed) exchange blockbusters

PHOTO COURTESY OF UNITED ARTISTS

DIGGING DEEP

by Ivan Goldman

LET'S MAKE A DEAL
Goldman feels he's got the perfect opponent for Chavez Junior

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

How To Save Chavez Junior's Career

There's a solution to the problems circling the career of Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., problems evidenced most recently when he pulled out only two days before a scheduled contest against Pawel Wolak.

Trouble and Chavez seem tied together in a tight knot. Making weight problems, training problems … the flu excuse, backed by the word of straight shooter Freddie Roach, seemed solid enough. But his promoter, Bob Arum, seemed ready to throw in the towel on his Chavez relationship. "He's only fought one time in a year," complained Arum. "Imagine putting him in with [Miguel] Cotto," he told MaxBoxing's Steve Kim, "spending millions of dollars on the promotion and uh … issues popping up?"

After Arum had time to reconsider, he was once again dangling the vision of a Chavez-Cotto fight down the road. But Cotto's not the solution for Chavez' problems. Saul "Canelo" Alvarez is.

I don't presume to tell Arum, the shrewdest promoter out there, how to make a buck. But isn't it a little screwy to continue concealing Chavez from most of the world? That's what he does with those Latino-weighted pay-per-view shows he builds around him. Were he to make a big fight for his much-protected Mexican prince, I expect the networks would once again show interest. And that's where Alvarez comes in.

Junior has had a curious career. After skipping the amateurs (not so unusual in Mexico), the son of the Mexican icon compiled a record of 41-0-1 (30) and 1 no-contest without ever facing a world-class fighter, yet he's safely berthed as the number-one middleweight contender by the Mexico City-based WBC anyway, entitling him to what alphabet charlatan-in-chief Jose Sulaiman calls a "silver" belt, meaning it comes at a price. The WBC used to rate Junior as number one at junior middleweight, but apparently he can't make the weight there anymore.

Team Chavez, like a 50-year-old man in a backwards baseball cap, could continue claiming he's just a kid, that he'll fight real contenders when he's ready. But Chavez will be 25 in February. What are they going to do? Stay with their story another few years and then claim he's too old to fight contenders?

Down the line, particularly given Arum's promotional savvy, Chavez versus Cotto would do well. Mexican-versus-Puerto Rican, big names, etc. And Arum, who promotes Cotto too, wouldn't have to split promotional proceeds. But Chavez-Alvarez? That's huge. Undefeated "Canelo" is just a kid, but he's very, very tough and adored by Mexicans as well as just about anybody who's seen him walk down an opponent. If the network execs don't like this fight, they ought to quit TV and open a flower shop. Also, such a meaningful Mexican standoff would give these two non-English-speaking fighters their best chance to connect with American fans.

I know. Matchmakers don't let two young prospects fight each other because, afterward, one of them will no longer be a

PHOTO BY MARL RALSTON/GETTY IMAGES

RAGING REDHEAD
A match between Alvarez and fellow Mexican Chavez Jr. would be a box-office blockbuster

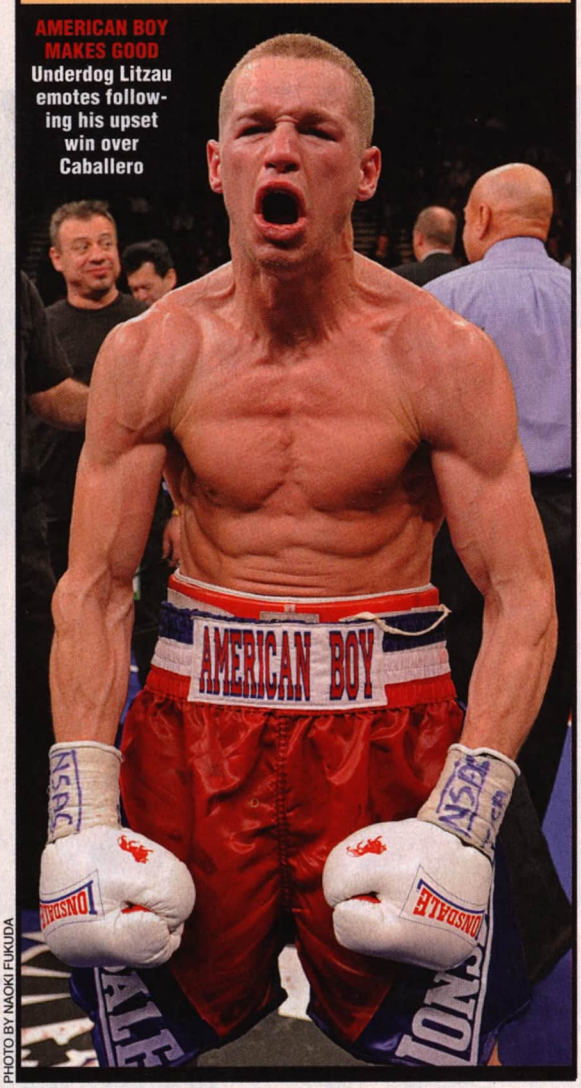
FUTCHES

Futch One

To Jason Litzau, one of the sport's many real-life Rocky Balboas. His grand moment? When world-class Celestino Caballero started backing away from him in round six.

Futch Two

Bob Arum. After rolling snake eyes versus Chavez' flu he probably would have come out better financially by just scratching the card altogether. HBO's Spanish-language channel partnered with Golden Boy to present Alvarez against Lovemore Ndou the same night—another dagger to the ribs of Arum's pay-per-view numbers and ticket sales. But by proceeding minus his headliner, Arum got all the fighters on the undercard paid. He even found Jose Pinzon as a last-minute opponent for Pawel Wolak. Plus, he hired cancer survivors Nick Charles and Genaro Hernandez to work the telecast with Rich Marotta. That's a lot of good deeds squeezed into a single night by one hard-nosed promoter.



AMERICAN BOY MAKES GOOD Underdog Litzau emotes following his upset win over Caballero

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

prospect, at least for a while. Also, as I write this, Alvarez' promoter, Golden Boy, is entangled in at least two serious lawsuits against people from Arum's Top Rank. So how do we get these two enemies to agree on a co-promotion?

Dollar bills, is how. If I were Golden Boy's Richard Schaefer, I'd take this fight in less time than it takes to pour a celebratory tequila. Feuds are dumb. They hurt business. Alvarez may be the next Chavez, but Chavez Junior is a Chavez. So it's a tremendous opportunity for Schaefer to solidify Alvarez's position as heir to the Mexican boxing throne. And down the line? Mexican beast Alfredo Angulo, but this is not the time.

Now let's climb into Arum's shoes: Is his kid a prospect, or is he a novelty act who won't ever be ready for prime time? Well, this is a perfect way and a perfect time to find out. Better to fight hammer-fisted Canelo now when he's only 20 because he'll only get better. Besides, setting Chavez up with tomato cans has sapped his confidence. This would help him see himself as the real deal, and Roach can put together a smart fight plan. When the kid sees the size of the purse, he's gonna love it.

Both Alvarez and Chavez show defects. Alvarez doesn't move enough, and Chavez, among other problems, seems to get bored after five or six rounds. If Junior beats the odds against favored Canelo, he's a hero. If he loses, his reputation could still be enhanced if he fights like a Mexican. And if the worst happens—he gets blasted out early and maybe doesn't want to continue his career afterward, everybody would cash in anyway. A co-promotion is a perfect way to bury the hatchet with Golden Boy. Because feuds are dumb. They hurt business.

Undefeated Cintron

Moments after Sergio Martinez' lightning left sent Paul Williams to the canvas like a dropped rock, analysts were already complaining there's no one around who can give Martinez a good fight. Are they nuts? What about Kermit Cintron? Look at his three losses—two to plaster-master Antonio Margarito and one to Williams for freakishly tripping and falling out of the ring. In other words, Cintron's never truly been defeated. He's a hard-luck guy who's taken on some of the toughest opponents out there (when they'll face him).

Size Matters

I quote colleague William Dettloff writing in RingTV.com: "Pacquiao's speed will always give him an advantage over bigger, heavier, slower guys. It's the small, fast guys—Juan Manuel Marquez, and, yes, Floyd Mayweather who present the real danger."

Of course. Little smackdown artists Abner Mares and Joseph Agbeko, for example, are wasting their time on bantamweights when there are all those easy pickings up at super middleweight. Think what a time these 115-pounders would have breaking down 168-pound bulls Glen Johnson or Carl Froch. Why, they'd never know what hit them.

I kid Dettloff. Though what he wrote sounds screwy, he's pretty much on the money. The big guys can barely lay a glove on the freakishly fleet-of-foot "Pac-Man." When they do, he's so tough he survives the storm. And he gets every ounce of his weight behind his paralyzing punches, so he hurts them and busts them up and beats them. Trouble is, they're dangerous fights. I don't mean dangerous because he might lose. I mean dangerous because he could get badly hurt against a much bigger man. The disparity in size makes such fights akin to circus acts. Pacquiao, really a junior welter, gobbles mountains of protein to get anywhere close to welter or junior middleweight. Let him keep proving his greatness in his own talent-laden division.

SKIMPY SCHEDULE
Chavez Jr. only fought once in 2010, winning a 12-round decision over John Duddy

PHOTO BY ROBERT HUGES/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

PHOTO BY ROBYN BECK/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

PAC POUNDED
Even though he won by a large margin, fighting naturally larger men will take a toll on Pacquiao

Bogus Book List

And speaking of RingTV.com, just before Christmas, it presented an article by Thomas Hauser naming the 40 "best books on boxing." All you have to know about the phony list that followed is that it excludes the universally acclaimed *Fat City* by Leonard Gardner, a novel that depicts the world of club fighters with a spare brilliance worthy of Chekhov at the height of his powers, a biting tale peopled with unforgettable characters leading tragicomic lives that are as honorable as they can get away with (The 1972 film starring Stacy Keach, Jeff Bridges, and Susan Tyrrell is also a fine work). You could perhaps legitimately argue there are three or four better books on boxing than Gardner's, but, when you tell us there are 40, you either don't know what you're talking about or you have a weird, weird ax to grind.

Also, the great W.C. Heinz's solid, engrossing, and wise *The Professional*, which is generally considered the standard against which all boxing novels must be measured, wasn't listed either, though it was given a back-handed mention. Why, you might ask, don't I counter Hauser's crummy list with one of my own? Glad you asked. Because naming the "best" books on boxing presumes that you've read all the books on boxing. In the case of any one person, that's pretty unlikely, which is one reason why THE RING fighter ratings and all our other ratings are done by committee. If you want to be fair, that's how you do it. However, you could justify working solo on a list of your favorites. The one word makes a resounding difference.

Modesty, perhaps genuine, prevented Hauser from including any of his own books on his screwy list, but they were named and recommended in an editor's note at the bottom. ■

Ivan Goldman can be contacted at ivangoldman@yahoo.com

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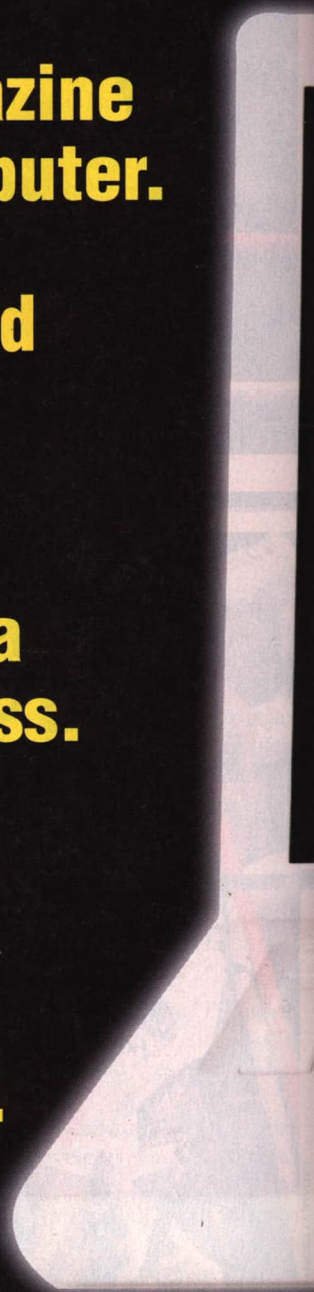

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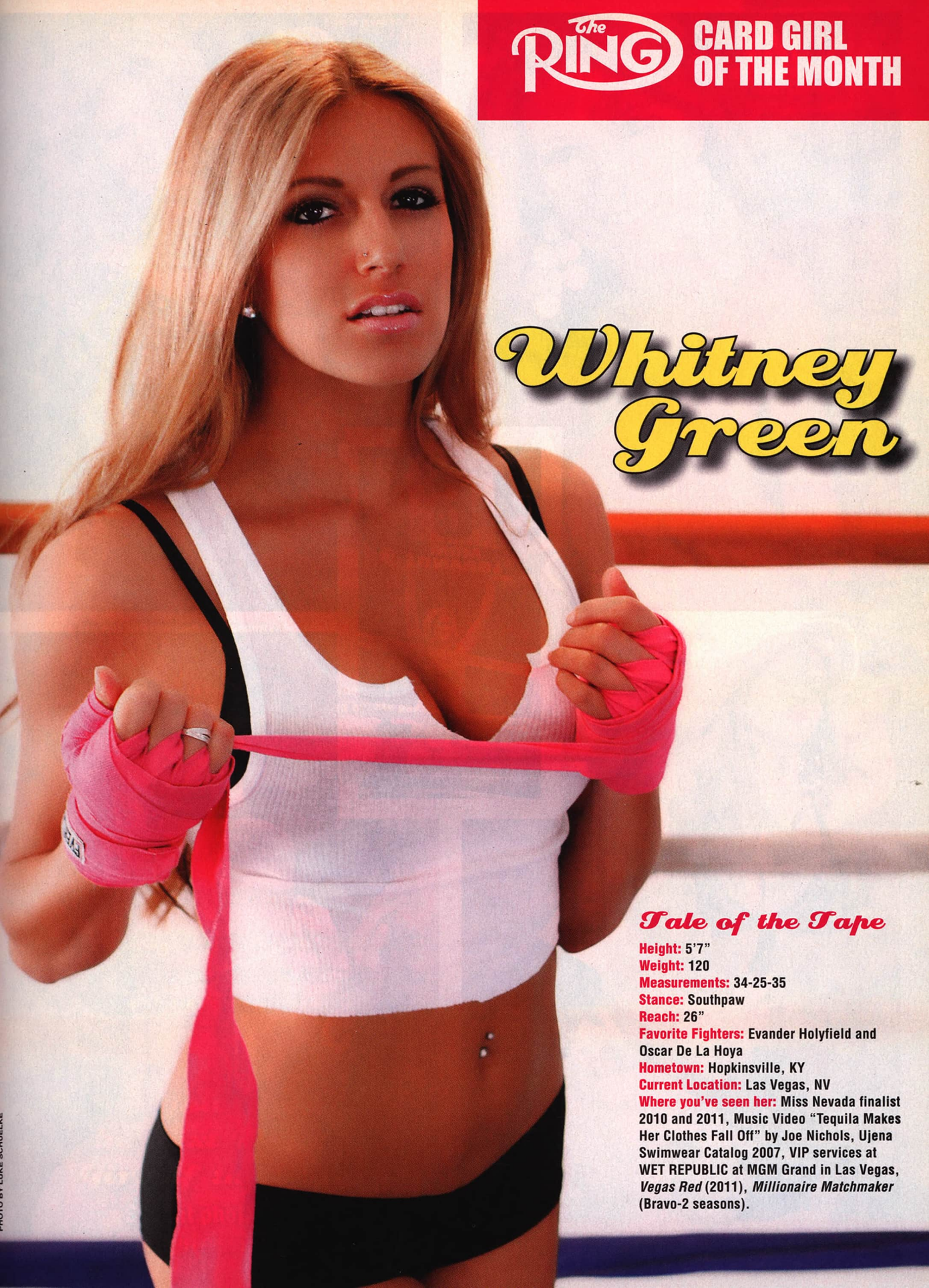


Whitney Green

Tale of the Tape

Height: 5'7"
Weight: 120
Measurements: 34-25-35
Stance: Southpaw
Reach: 26"
Favorite Fighters: Evander Holyfield and Oscar De La Hoya
Hometown: Hopkinsville, KY
Current Location: Las Vegas, NV
Where you've seen her: Miss Nevada finalist 2010 and 2011, Music Video "Tequila Makes Her Clothes Fall Off" by Joe Nichols, Ujena Swimwear Catalog 2007, VIP services at WET REPUBLIC at MGM Grand in Las Vegas, *Vegas Red* (2011), *Millionaire Matchmaker* (Bravo-2 seasons).

PHOTO BY LUKE SCHUELKE

PHOTO BY DAVID ALAN

PHOTO BY DAVID ALAN

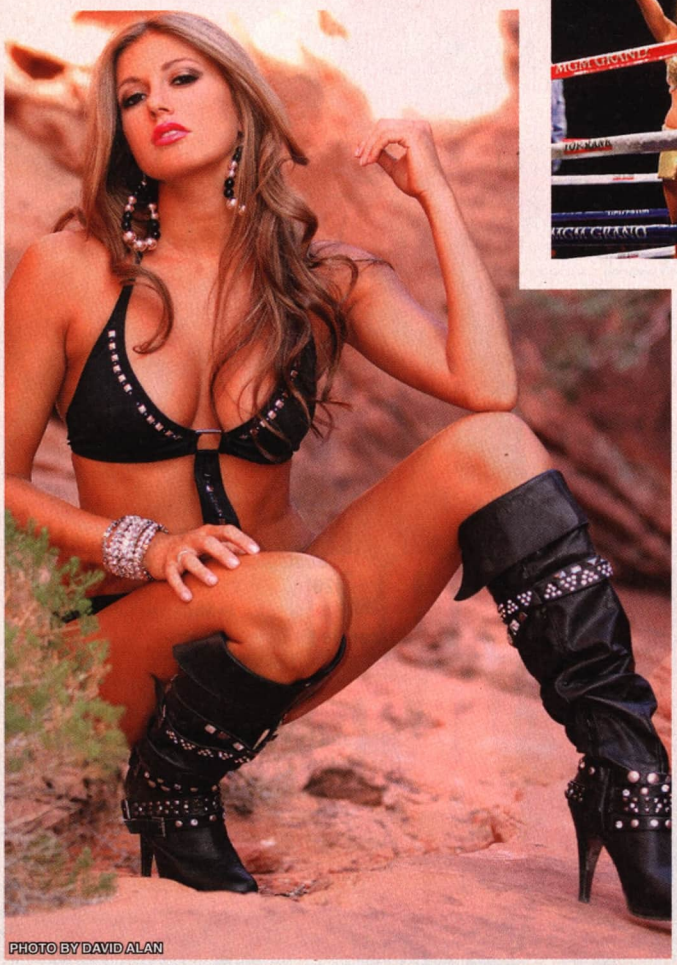


PHOTO BY DAVID ALAN

PHOTO BY DAVID ALAN

So I see that you are from a small town in Kentucky. How did you end up in Las Vegas?
About three years ago, I piled into a car—not an SUV—a car with two girlfriends, a dog, and all of our luggage and drove to Los Angeles to pursue my dreams.

I see, the *Pretty Woman* story.
Well, not exactly, our story has nothing to do with one important part of that movie.

Thank you for correcting me. That is an important distinction.
We rented an apartment in LA that was probably smaller than the car we were in, and, after about nine months, I started getting opportunities in Las Vegas and decided to move. And here I am!

I don't hear even the slightest Southern Drawl? Is that intentional?
I never had a deep accent, but I admit that I've made an effort to smooth out the edges. I can still lay it on thick if I want to.

How did you get into being a ring card girl?
I was working the VIP cabanas at WET REPUBLIC for MGM Grand and the Director of Entertainment asked if I wanted to give it a try, and I said yes.

Had you done anything like that before?
Not really, but I just decided to run with it and have fun.

What's it like up there for you?
It's almost like being in a beauty pageant, so I just put on a smile, stay classy, and try not to show too much of my behind when stepping through the ropes. *(laughs)*

So you've been in beauty pageants.
It's part of growing up in the South; it's unavoidable.

Are you still involved in pageantry?
Actually, I am the 2010 4th Runner Up and 2011 2nd Runner Up for Miss Nevada. Always improving. Next year is my year!

Congratulations and good luck next year. What do you do when not entertaining crowds at fights and beauty pageants?
Well, I'm afraid of heights, but I love challenging myself, so I am taking up skydiving this year. I swam with sharks last year. I like to cook, but it's Southern cooking so I can't eat that kind of food very often.

Why not?
Twice baked potato casserole and fried chicken are not the best meal choices if I want to keep working and win Miss Nevada next year.

I see, the deadly Kentucky and Colonel Sanders combination.
Exactly.

How can people get in touch with you for bookings and other opportunities?
The best way is to visit my website: www.whitneymgreen.com.

Whitney, it's been a pleasure speaking with you. We'll see you at MGM Grand soon!
Thanks!

Do you want to be the next Ring Card Girl of the Month?

Submit photos and bio to ringcardgirl@sepublications.com.

PHOTO BY LUKE SCHUELKE

"DINAMITA" BLOWS AWAY KATSIDIS

Juan Manual Marquez: Not The Boring One Anymore

By William Dettloff

If humans are still following boxing 70 or 80 years from now, and we all should hope for their sake that they are, they will look back at the 1990s and a little after as a Golden Age of Mexican featherweight-ish prizefighters. This is not an original thought. We've known for as long as Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, and Juan Manuel Marquez have been splitting eyebrows and flattening noses that, as a set, they are as good as anything this business has produced, in any era. They have been three uncommonly and singularly committed, skilled, and tenacious Mexican warriors all doing business at the same

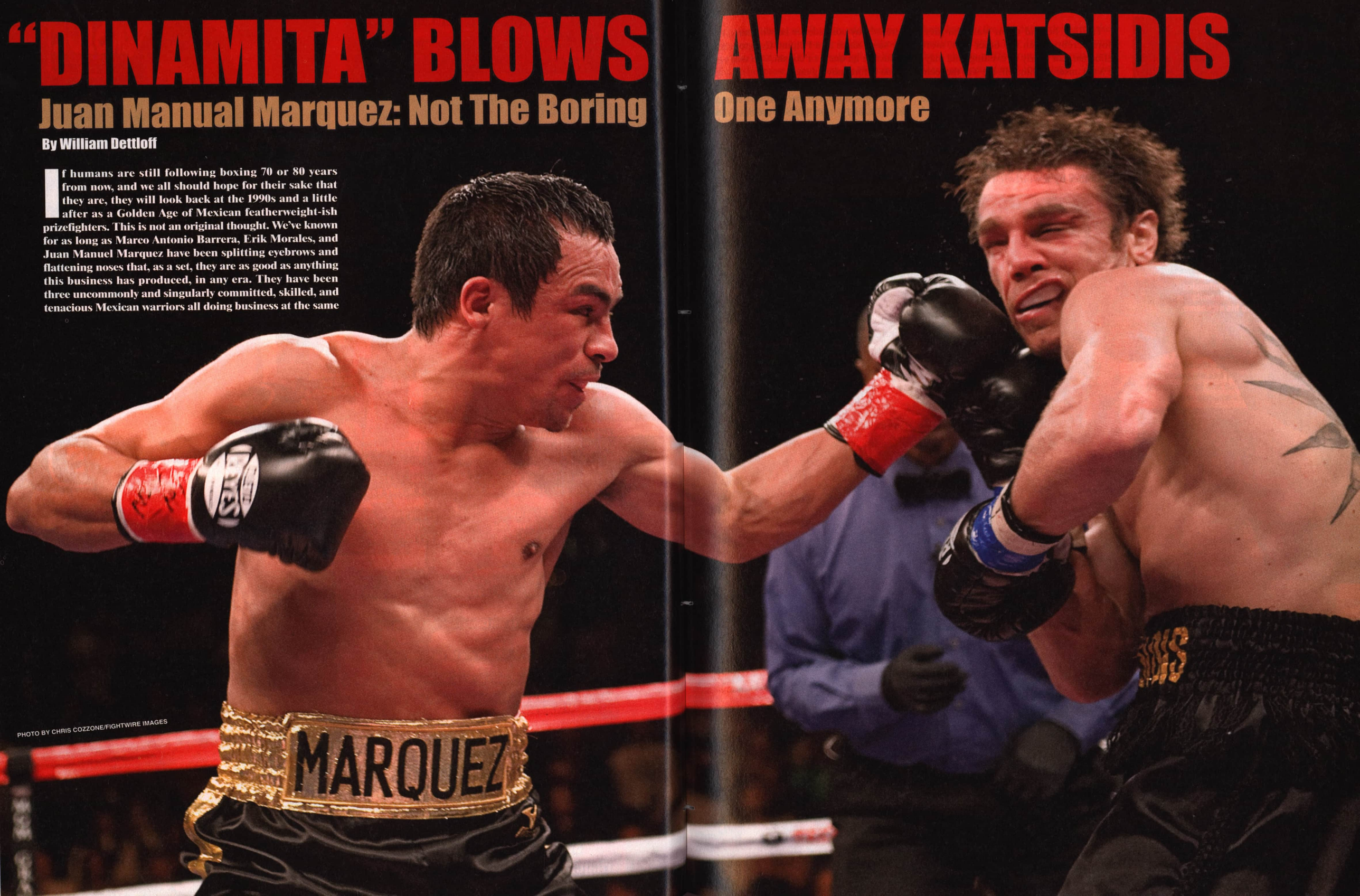


PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

time, at or around the same weight, and largely against one another.

Future historians will note that of the three it was Barrera who broke out first, his left hook and body attack reminiscent of a miniature Julio Cesar Chavez, all pressure and steely arrogance. Then came Morales not more than a year later, hollow-eyed, long-armed, seemingly emaciated, a 125-pound Tommy Hearns. They eventually would make wonderful, terrible, bloody music together.

Trailing behind them was Marquez. More cerebral than the other two, more deliberate, not nearly as exciting, and maybe a tad unsure of himself. He was the technician, content to jab or counter, where Barrera and Morales charged in, fists flying. He was the dull one.

The determined historian will note that by the halfway point of the following decade, Barrera and Morales were more or less finished, each done in to some degree or another by a whirlwind Filipino, who, certainly by coincidence he will think, had the same name as a Filipino Congressman. "Must be an uncle or cousin," he will conclude before moving on.

Then he will see this: Marquez fought at the highest level in the sport well into his later 30s and was still one of the best in the world when the other two had lost most of what had made them special. And he was no longer the dull one.

It must be with some bemusement that Barrera and Morales watch Marquez at work these days, at 37 years old, beating back strong, young pressure fighters like he did Juan Diaz in 2009's Fight of the Year. Then, in his most recent bout, on November 27 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Marquez battered 30-year-old Australian buzzsaw Michael Katsidis into such a state of helplessness, referee Kenny Bayless had no alternative other than to rescue Katsidis at the 2:14 mark of the ninth round.

If Barrera and Morales had ever been friendly with one another, one could imagine them back in the old days celebrating their manliness over a few Tecates or Coronas, their chests puffed out, sniggering over Marquez' reluctance to engage. *"Mujer! Cómo se puede perder Freddie Norwood* (Woman! How can you lose to Freddie Norwood)?"

There is little for them to feel superior about now, and not only because Marquez outpointed Barrera in 2007. "Dinamita" is the world lightweight champion and the fourth best prizefighter on the planet, pound-for-pound. Neither of those proud designations appears in danger for the foreseeable future. Indeed, if Marquez has his way, the resume will only be enhanced down the road. And yes, a 37-year-old fighter can have a "down-the-road." At least this one can. But more on that later.

Barrera, a year younger than Marquez, was surprisingly spry against third-tier Adailton De Jesus in a June 2010 decision win but

BACK ON THE ATTACK
Marquez' new, more fan-friendly style is employed even when he's fighting a dangerous puncher such as Katsidis. Normally, as fighters get older, they become more defensive-minded. But at age 37, "Dinamita" is certainly living up to his nickname.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

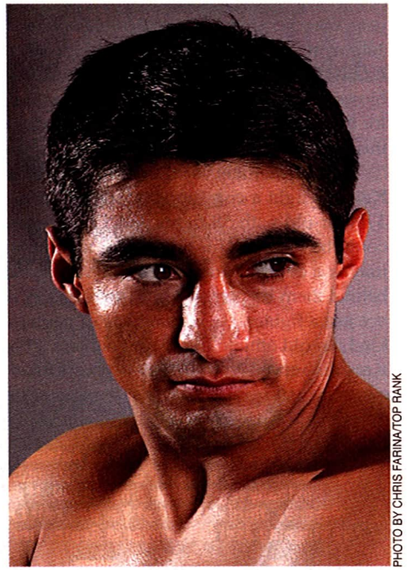


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

AND THEN THERE WAS ONE
Marquez is one of a trio of great Mexican fighters who all fought around the same time and same weight. But while Marquez is still a world champion and pound-for-pound entrant, Morales (top) and Barrera (bottom) are no longer considered elite fighters.

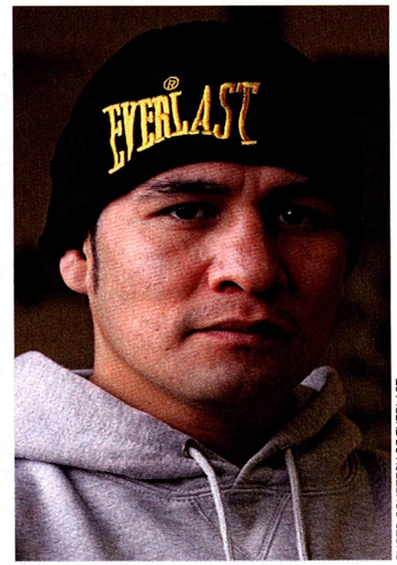


PHOTO COURTESY OF EVERLAST

hasn't been considered an elite fighter since twice scraping by Rocky Juarez in 2006. He is all but semiretired. Morales, the youngest of the three at a mere 34, lost four straight—including a humiliating blowout against Manny Pacquiao in their rubber match—and retired for three years. But in early 2010, he mounted a comeback that, as of this writing, has seen him beat modest competition.

It is a testament to Marquez' reputation that he went in to the Katsidis fight a considerable betting favorite. If it were any other 37-year-old with 58 fights and 17 hard years in this business, you could be forgiven for hoping for a good physician at ringside and maybe a defibrillator. The list of very good fighters with so much behind them is short and grows shorter by the year. But Marquez is not just a fighter. He is an athlete of perhaps the most extraordinary kind, an old athlete in a young athlete's body, and his stoppage of Katsidis served as proof, as if you needed any more, that we are seeing in this man something remarkable. Not just world-class ability. Not just exceptional longevity. Both together.

"With all the good Mexican fighters I've been associated with down through the years, he's lasted longer than any of them," Hall of Fame promoter Don Chargin told THE RING. "Usually, with the Mexican fighters, the ones from Mexico start very, very young and by their mid-20s that's it, they're usually on their way out, or when they get close to that 30 mark. This guy's amazing."

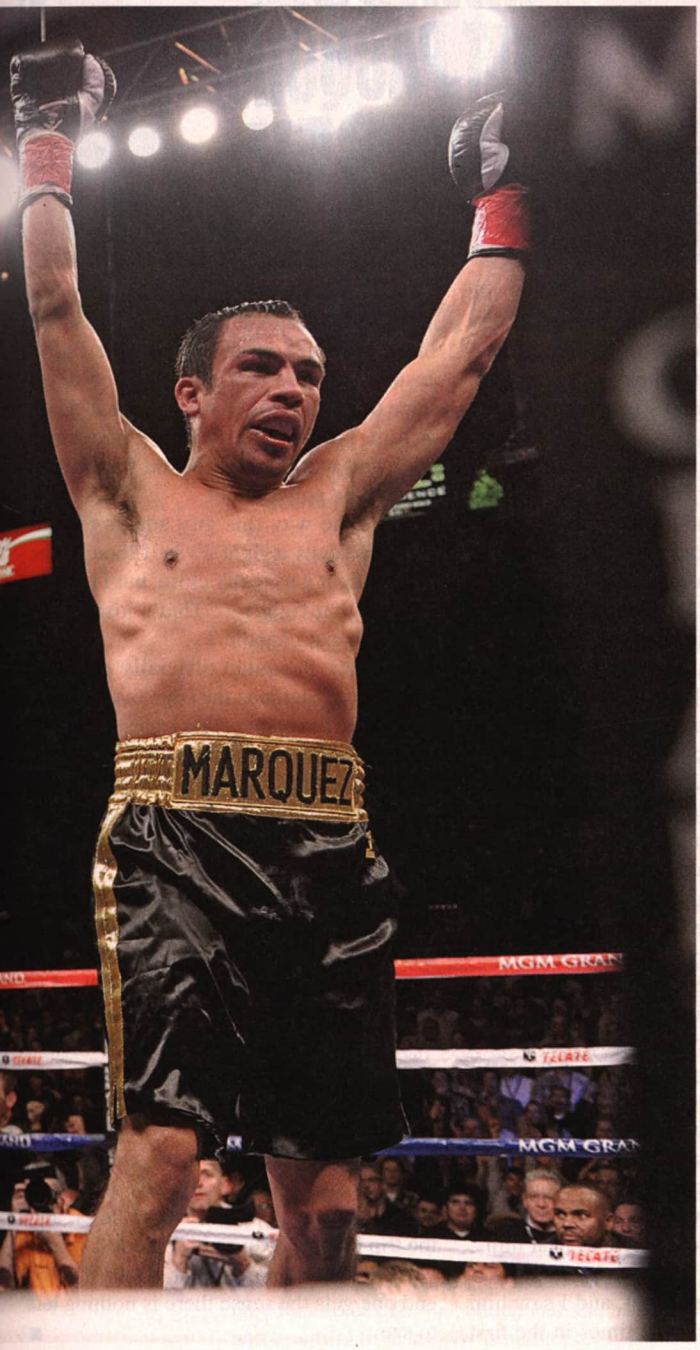
That Marquez, 52-5-1 (38), was floored in the third round by a thunderous hook from Katsidis but, by the round's end was nonetheless peppering his challenger with typical efficiency underlines what resides at the core of this man, who was once thought of as a safety-first dullard. He's a *fighter*, through and through. Marquez has effectively reinvented himself, to use a modern and mostly reprehensibly overused phrase, which in this case happens to fit.

STILL CHAMPION
Referee Kenny Bayless rescues Katsidis, who had been badly battered and was stumbling on unsteady legs, in the ninth round. It was Marquez' third defense of THE RING belt he won by stopping Joel Casamayor in September 2008.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Barrera did the same thing, if in reverse, when he discovered after losing to Junior Jones in 1996 that he could not left-hook his way to victory over everybody. He became a classical boxer and broke opponents apart piece by piece with one of the best jabs in the game. To those of us who had marveled at the beautiful and compelling savagery Barrera displayed against Kennedy McKinney and the others, this could have been seen as a kind of insult, but it added years to Barrera's career, good years, and millions to his bank account. And against the right guy, he could still get in there and crank hooks to the body. That jab gave him options. It made him a new fighter.

Marquez' abandonment of his safety-first ways has done similar things for him. The hardcore still adore him for his craft, combination punching, brilliant footwork, deft head movement, and precision. But he lays his head in there more now, so even a lesser-skilled guy like Katsidis, 27-4 (22), can find it without trying too hard. Now the masses can love him too. Katsidis landed dozens of hooks square on Marquez' head and jaw, and, if it weren't so damned exciting, you might have wondered if Marquez made the right decision to fight more and box less.



COMPUBOX STATS

JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ		MICHAEL KATSIDIS
628	Total Punches Thrown	630
327	Total Connects	194
52	Connect Percentage	31
338	Total Power Punches Thrown	484
214	Total Power Connects	155
290	Total Jabs Thrown	146
113	Total Jabs Connects	39

Chargin related a story about Bobby Chacon, the wonderful featherweight and junior lightweight titleholder from the 1970s and '80s, who, like Marquez, started off as more boxer than puncher and today lingers in dire straits in California, debilitated with dementia and other unpleasantness related to his affinity for taking punches.

"He was such a good boxer when he was very young and coming up that you absolutely could not hit him," Chargin said.

Then came a night, Chargin recalled, that Chacon went into a fight out of shape and, as a result, stood and slugged with his opponent, eventually knocking him out. "Afterward he told me, 'Wow, I loved hearing that crowd cheering for me.' And from then on, even in shape, he'd go in flat-footed and trade punches, and that's why the poor guy is like he is today."

We should hope, of course, that the same tragedy does not befall Marquez. But examined from another angle, it is hard to imagine that Marquez would be scoring the paydays he is today if he were still jabbing and countering his way to efficient wins rather than fighting, if not with the abandon of Morales, then with the calculated ferocity of, say, prime Ray Leonard. Provided he is saving some of his money, Marquez will at least be well cared for should all these hard nights add up to harder ones later on.

Of the three, Morales is the only one to have stayed true to his original style, which is to say he still sees taking punches not only as a necessary part of the game but perhaps even an enjoyable one. So long as he is able to get close enough to land his own, he seems perfectly happy to take a few. *Go ahead and hit me so I can hit you better.* This may explain why he seemed to lose both his taste for the game and for the firefights when he did. Morales was just 31 when he took the full count while wide awake in his second loss to Pacquiao and retired after losing to the ordinary David Diaz in his next fight. The hard fights—and they're all hard when you don't move your head—wear on you. We will see how long into his comeback the rediscovered love of the battle lasts. Except for the truly deranged, it doesn't last forever.

It may be that Marquez' seemingly unquenchable desire for hard contact and victory is what fuels his exuberance. As trainer Ronnie Shields told The Ring, "The guy is just determined to be the best. Normally, when you get to a certain age and you get these young kids putting pressure on you like these young guys are doing to him, they say, 'I'll give it up.' But this guy, he wants to be the best fighter in the world."

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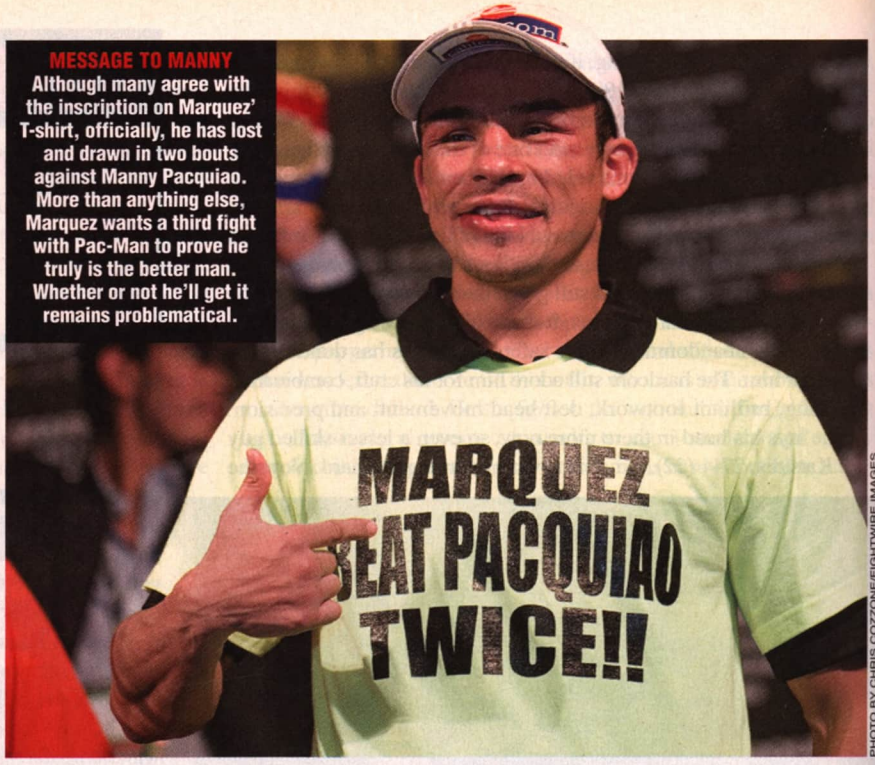


PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

MESSAGE TO MANNY
Although many agree with the inscription on Marquez' T-shirt, officially, he has lost and drawn in two bouts against Manny Pacquiao. More than anything else, Marquez wants a third fight with Pac-Man to prove he truly is the better man. Whether or not he'll get it remains problematical.

Shields has been in the corner opposite Marquez at least three times—twice with Juan Diaz and once with Rocky Juarez, who Marquez tortured over 12 rounds in 2007—and he remains perplexed by the man.

"Before the Juarez fight, I studied Marquez over and over and over, especially the Chris John fight, and I figured he was really gonna take it to Rocky," Shields recalled. "And he did the opposite, he ended up outboxing Rocky." Shields got another chance with Diaz and did no better.

"We figured Marquez was going to have to box Juan [Diaz], but, at some point he would have to stand and fight. At that point, we thought Juan would wear him down and make him say, 'I can't continue like this. I can't take this pressure.' Juan did everything we asked him to, but this guy wasn't going nowhere. I couldn't say that to Juan, but in my mind I'm thinking: *Juan's doing everything we asked him to, but no matter what he did this guy was still there*."

It is this immense stubbornness that Marquez hopes will get him a third fight with Pacquiao. Marquez advocated for such a meeting following the win over Katsidis, reminding everyone that in his mind—and in the minds of many others—he has two wins over Pacquiao. Shields also hopes Marquez gets another crack at Pacquiao.

"I understand why he wants the Pacquiao fight. He has the style to beat him," Shields said.

"I was at the first fight, and I saw him get knocked down three times in the first round. I was sittin' next to a friend of mine, Jesse James Leija, and I told Jesse, 'Look man, Marquez is gonna win the fight.' Jesse said, 'He just got knocked down three times!' I said: 'You know what? Look at him. He's not hurt. He's gonna come back and win this fight.' And truthfully, I thought he pulled it out.

"It's the way this guy adapts to your style. He does it right away. I thought the second fight was really close, but I thought he won that fight too. That's just a style Pacquiao can't handle."

Beating Pacquiao officially certainly would give Marquez the edge over Barrera in terms of their competing legacies. Barrera was a magnificent fighter at his best but could do nothing with Pacquiao, particularly in their first match. Their second was closer, but that seemed more Pacquiao's choice than anything.

Morales, of course, outpointed an oddly sluggish Pacquiao in their first meeting for reasons no one has ever been able to explain beyond Pacquiao not being permitted to wear his preferred brand of glove. Whatever. The knockout wins Pacquiao scored in their subsequent meetings cleared up any confusion involving the identity of the superior fighter.

Marquez hopes he gets the same chance Morales did, and so do we. He has come such a long way to get where he is, and the trip has not been easy. The most worthwhile ones never are, but it is nice if at the end one gets the sense there is nothing left to see. ■

YEAR-END SPECTACULAR

The Best of 2010

Compiled by Nigel Collins, Joseph Santoliquito, Don Stradley, and Eric Raskin

Since THE RING gave its very first Fighter of the Year award to Gene Tunney in 1928, the recipients were generally American-born fighters. True, there have been occasional exceptions such as Ingemar Johansson (Sweden), Emile Griffith (Virgin Islands), Dick Tiger (Nigeria), Nino Benvenunti (Italy), Jose Napoles (Cuba), Carlos Monzon (Argentina), plus the Mexican trio of Carlos Zarate, Salvador Sanchez, and Julio Cesar Chavez.

But since the advent of the 21st century, foreign-born fighters have begun to dominate the Fighter of the Year category. In fact, only one out of the seven most-recent winners was born in the USA, and that was Floyd Mayweather, who garnered top honors in 2006. The other six were Jamaican Glen Johnson ('04), Englishman Ricky Hatton ('05), Filipino Manny Pacquiao ('06, '08, '09), and Argentina's Sergio Martinez in 2010.

The international flavor has also spread to other categories, with foreign fighters also winning the Fight, Round, and Knockout of the Year awards in 2010. Moreover, none of the six reigning RING champions are from the USA, and only two of the fighters in our current pound-for-pound are Americans.

Contrary to what some might assume, this is not a bad thing. Like soccer, boxing has always been a truly global sport, and, if a fighter is good enough, fans throughout the world usually embrace him. Pacquiao is presently the most obvious example, but to one degree or another, Johnson, Hatton, and Martinez also became popular attractions in the US.

The same thing happens elsewhere: Canada's two biggest stars, Lucian Bute and Jean Pascal, were born in Romania and Haiti, respectively. Wladimir and Vitali Klitschko continue to sell out virtually every major venue in Germany, but they were born in the Ukraine.

What is it about boxing that allows it to cross all sorts of national, cultural, ethnic, and religious boundaries? Why do millions of Americans pay hefty pay-per-view fees to watch a guy form the Philippines do battle against a guy from Mexico or England?

It has often been noted that all people have much more in common with each other than they do differences, but they still fight pointless wars where millions are killed and maimed for reasons that make absolutely no sense whatsoever.

It seems that boxing, for all its faults, holds up a mirror in which we can all see some of mankind's universally admired traits—honor, bravery, resiliency, and the will to survive and succeed.

Therefore, THE RING is proud to honor boxers regardless of their origins. If nothing else, they remind us that, yes, underneath the hate and mistrust, we are all of one people, a strange and beautiful tribe known as human beings.

FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Sergio Martinez

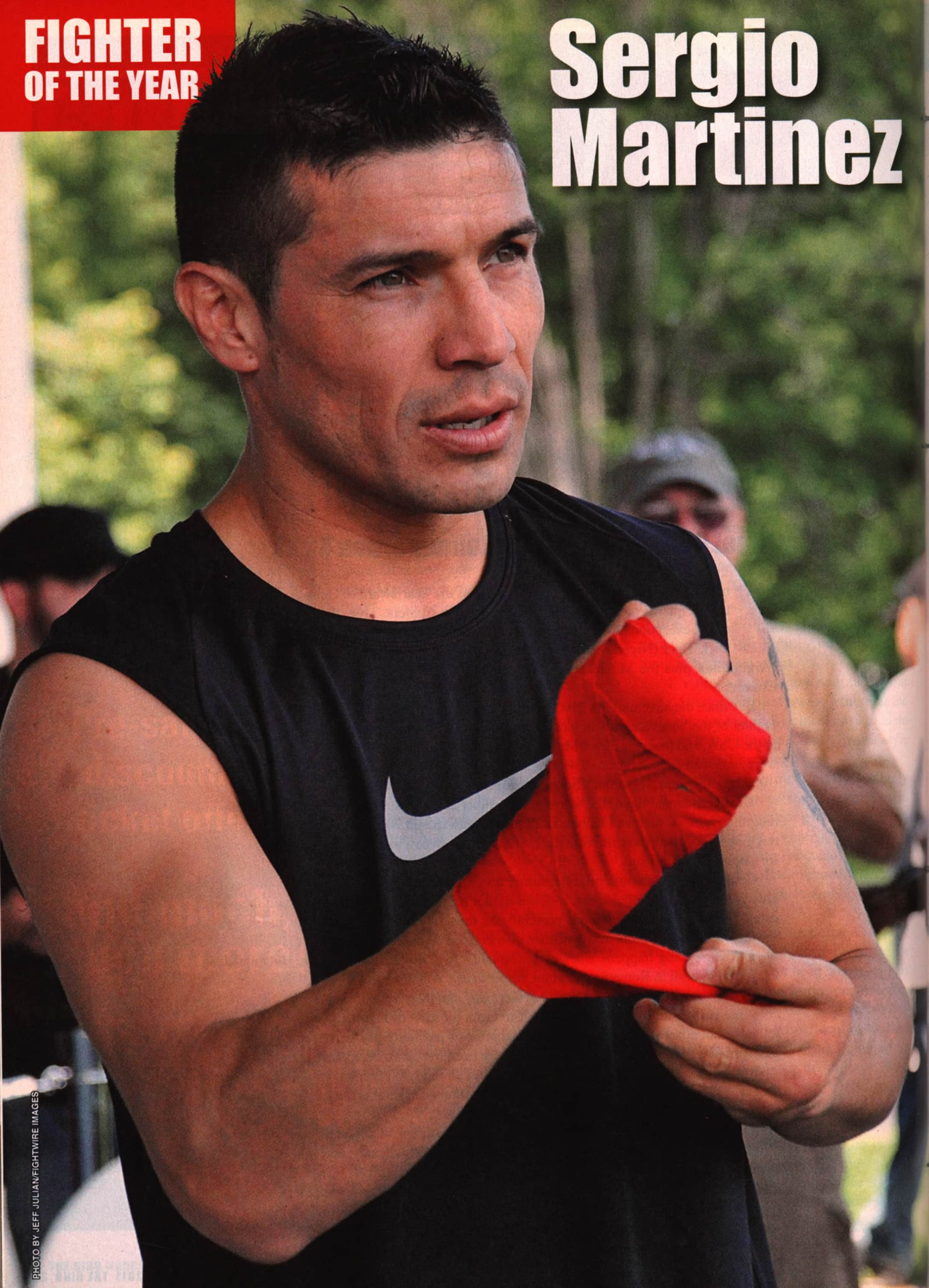


PHOTO BY JEFF J. JULIAN/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

With one punch, Sergio Martinez left Paul Williams' eyes wide open and the Fighter of the Year balloting closed.

As definitive and conclusive as the knockout of "The Punisher" was, the premature ending to the race for the year's top boxing award was equally definitive and conclusive. It didn't matter what anybody else did over the remaining six weeks of the year. Nobody had any chance of catching Martinez.

Granted, that's not exactly an unheard-of scenario. Frequently the Fighter of the Year award is a done deal, no room for debate, by November. So what makes Martinez' landslide victory so unique? Its juxtaposition with where he was a couple of years ago. On very few occasions in the history of THE RING has a boxer gone from obscurity to top year-end honors so quickly.

When 2008 began, Martinez was a nobody in America. He was one of countless overseas fighters with glossy records and decent alphabet rankings but no meaning-

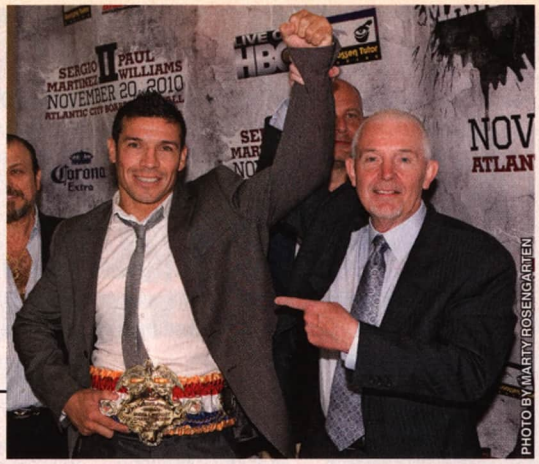


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

IT'S OFFICIAL
Martinez receives his RING championship belt from Editor-in-Chief Nigel Collins at the New York City press conference announcing the Martinez-Paul Williams fight.

HONORABLE MENTION

Showing off his skills in perfect balance with thrills, **Juan Manuel Lopez** rose to the top of the featherweight division and made it onto the pound-for-pound list in 2010. First he moved up from 122 pounds and dominated Steven Luevano, then "JuanMa" got off the deck to blast out Bernabe Concepcion in two rounds, and the Puerto Rican star ended the year with an exciting eighth-round stoppage of Rafael Marquez. Three fights, three knockouts—all in all, quite a rebound from the Rogers Mtagwa scare in '09.

Fernando Montiel has historically been a hot and cold fighter, and 2010 was a year in which he stayed hot. The bantamweight's big win was a fourth-round stoppage of Hozumi Hasegawa to halt a five-year title reign, but "Cochulito" also looked sharp knocking out Ciso Morales, Rafael Concepcion, Eduardo Garcia, and Javanny Soto.

Ivan Calderon was undefeated through 35 fights and gaining pound-for-pound steam. Then he ran into **Giovani Segura**. The aggressive Mexican banger grabbed THE RING junior flyweight championship by making Calderon surrender and had a 4-0 (4) year overall as he moved back and forth between 108 and 112 pounds.

British junior welterweight **Amir Khan** launched his US campaign in 2010 and tallied two impressive wins. First, Khan scored an 11th round TKO of Paul Malignaggi in New York City. It was, however, Khan's hard-fought 12-round decision over dangerous Marcos Maidana in Las Vegas that earned him a spot on this list.

It's a shame he only fought once in 2010, or else **Floyd Mayweather** might have been in serious contention for this award. Still, his dismantling of Shane Mosley in May, which saw him survive a scary second round to take his fellow future Hall of Famer to school the rest of the way, was impressive enough to get "Money" on the Honorable Mention list.

The heavyweight division is devoid of worthy challengers, but **Wladimir Klitschko** continues to do the best he can with the options he has. In 2010, that meant convincing knockouts of Eddie Chambers and Sam Peter, in defense of THE RING crown.

And what would a Fighter of the Year discussion be without mention of the '08 and '09 winner, **Manny Pacquiao**? The Filipino icon's competition wasn't quite up to snuff this year, but it was hard to find fault with his performances against Joshua Clottey and Antonio Margarito, which drew roughly 80,000 fans combined to Cowboys Stadium.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

LOPEZ HOOKS MARQUEZ
"JuanMa" Lopez topped off a very good year by stopping Rafael Marquez

SERGIO MARTINEZ: THE YEAR THAT WAS

For a variety of reasons, Kelly Pavlik and Paul Williams just couldn't get it together to face each other the last couple of years. Can you imagine how different Martinez' life might be right now if that hadn't been the case?

In late 2009, Pavlik-Williams was the bout the boxing world wanted and expected to see in the middleweight division. When Pavlik kept having to pull out of a fight that was signed and ready to go a couple of times, Martinez ultimately stepped in and got his breakthrough opportunity against Williams that ended in a disputed defeat. In 2010, when Pavlik-Williams negotiations began again, but Team Williams couldn't find a deal they were satisfied with, Pavlik gave the fans what was viewed as the next best thing: a fight with Martinez.

Whatever the forces keeping Pavlik and Williams apart, their failure to hook up repeatedly proved to be Martinez' gain. And in 2010, it was directly at Pavlik's and Williams' expense that the Argentine cemented his status as one of boxing's best. Here's how the back-up option became the division's leading man:

W 12 Kelly Pavlik, Atlantic City, New Jersey, April 17, 2010: We all know now that Pavlik has his share of problems. On this night at Boardwalk Hall, he learned that if you're having problems, fighting a slick, tricky, smart fighter like Maravilla can only compound them.

The crowd of 6,179 was mostly rooting for Pavlik, but Martinez silenced them early by boxing herky-jerky rings around the middleweight champion for the first four rounds. The challenger's hands and feet were too fast and Pavlik quickly grew frustrated—but to his credit, "The Ghost" didn't just disappear. He started to find the range and close the

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

BIRTH OF A CHAMPION
Martinez attacks then-reigning middleweight champion Pavlik en route to winning a 12-round unanimous decision and the world middleweight championship.

ful victories to his credit. In October '08, he finally made his HBO debut at age 33 and caught some buzz with a seemingly effortless destruction of Alex Bunema. He made huge strides in '09, particularly when he came in as a late sub and a heavy underdog and pushed the highly regarded Williams to the brink en route to losing a majority decision. That debatable loss put "Maravilla" on the radar at the elite level.

But being on the radar and being atop the mountain are two very different things. 2010 bridged that gap. Martinez outpointed Kelly Pavlik for the middleweight championship of the world and then iced Williams in two rounds in their rematch. He shot up to number three pound-for-pound and he did it by winning a fight in which he was the clear betting underdog and then winning a pick-'em fight more destructively and impressively than anyone imagined he could.

Martinez isn't just a radar guy now. He's a mountaintop guy.

"I'm really honored by this," Martinez said when informed he'd been named Fighter of the Year. "To think where my career was this time last year, to get where I am now has been amazing. It took a lot of belief in myself, and the belief my team had in me. I've always kept a positive outlook, no matter what happened to me in the past, and I think that attitude has helped me get here."

Looking down the list of past recipients of THE RING's Fighter of the Year award, there are very few whose ascendancy stories resemble Martinez'. In the last several decades, there's only one other that's similar: Glen Johnson in 2004.

Johnson was 35 at the time, just as Martinez is now. Johnson had scored two major victories, one a tough decision that earned him a RING championship, the other a spectacular knockout that nobody saw coming. Johnson was respected as a quality veteran fighter, but prior to 2004, nobody imagined that he could beat pound-for-pound

VICTOR AND VANQUISHED
Martinez celebrates his second-round knockout of Williams as referee Earl Morton comes to Williams' aid.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

distance in the fifth, and he caught an off-balance Martinez with a right hand in the seventh that put him on the deck. By the time Pavlik won the eighth round as well, Martinez appeared to be a point behind and watching his title hopes fade fast.

But just as dramatically as the momentum had shifted in the middle four rounds, it shifted back for the final four. Thirty seconds into the ninth round, a left hand from Martinez opened a cut over Pavlik's right eye, the blood began to flow, and Martinez did precisely what you're supposed to: He pounced. While Pavlik was distracted and discouraged by the wound, Martinez was unrelenting, keeping his arms churning. According to CompuBox stats, Martinez landed 112 punches over the final four rounds, while Pavlik landed 51.

When the scores of 115-111, 115-112, and 116-111 were read, we had a new middleweight champ. Martinez was older than Pavlik. He was shorter than Pavlik. He was smaller than Pavlik. So what? He was *better* than Pavlik.

KO 2 Paul Williams, Atlantic City, New Jersey, November 20, 2010: Eleven months earlier, Martinez and Williams went to war for 12 rounds in a Fight of the Year candidate. When the rematch began in front of a crowd of 5,502 at Boardwalk Hall, the punches flew, the fighters were exchanging on even terms, and it might as well have been round 13 of the first fight.

But round 14 looked quite a bit different from its predecessors.

About 40 seconds into the round, Martinez timed his fellow southpaw with a left hand, but the impact wasn't quite perfect and Williams walked right through the shot. Twenty seconds later, a similar opening arose, and, this time, the impact *was* perfect. Williams leaned into a short, crushing left hand that he never saw, lost consciousness instantly, and crash-landed on his face. Williams' eyes remained open, but everything else about his body suggested he was asleep—and Martinez knew it, which was why he was leaping around in celebration when referee Earl Morton was barely midway through his count. A few seconds later, at 1:10 of the second round, Morton waved his arms in the air and Martinez' celebration officially became one of victory.

entrants. And he was endlessly likeable, a down-to-earth guy whose hard work bred overdue success, and the entire boxing world embraced him.

Just six years later, history has repeated itself—and that's a positive development for the sport of boxing. We need feel-good stories, and we also need a shakeup of the status quo from time to time. It was about time for someone other than Manny Pacquiao or Floyd Mayweather to win this award. It was time for a new fighter to come along and capture our imagination. Martinez isn't young; he isn't what you'd call a star of the future. But he's a star of the present, that's for sure.

And he's quickly becoming an icon in his native Argentina, a country that hasn't put a fighter on the cover of THE RING since the legendary Carlos Monzon—another middleweight champion—more than three decades ago.

"That's great company to be in," said Martinez, who has always considered Monzon a pugilistic idol. "There's only one Monzon, and I'm not trying to take his place. But I still have a lot more to do in my career."

In other words, Martinez isn't banking on this being his final cover appearance. Nor should he. He's an anomaly in that, in part because of his late start in the fight game, he's getting better and better with every fight even in his mid-30s. So there could well be more covers in his future and there could also be more Fighter of the Year awards.

Given how he performed against Pavlik and Williams, Martinez might be at the point where getting better and better with every fight is about to become impossible. That's just fine. The level he's at right now is already exceptional. It's a level that nobody else approached in 2010. ■

FIGHT OF THE YEAR

PHOTO BY GERMAN BILLASENOR

SMALL BUT MIGHTY
Segura closes in for the finish

Giovani Segura-Ivan Calderon

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

FORCED TO FIGHT
Segura's attack was so fierce, Calderon had no alternative but to fire back, which led to virtually non-stop action.

HONORABLE MENTION

With most of the year's best fights happening in November and December, it felt a little like Oscar season, when all of the best movies seem to come out at the end of the year just in time to get the Motion Picture Academy's attention.

On November 11, **"JuanMa" Lopez** and **Rafael Marquez** put on a wicked battle at The MGM Grand in Las Vegas. The early rounds were hotly contested, with Lopez surviving some scary moments early, but claiming the victory when Marquez didn't come out for the eighth.

The MGM Grand was also the location of the November 27 bout between lightweight champ **Juan Manuel Marquez** and **Michael Katsidis**. Tough Aussie Katsidis knocked Marquez flat in the third, but the Mexican veteran pulled out the win with a ninth-round stoppage.

On December 4, lightweight contender **Humberto Soto** scored a bloody unanimous decision over **Urbano Antillon** in Anaheim. This one was so close that a point deduction in the fifth round cost Antillon a majority draw.

It's rare to see two fight of the year candidates on the same night, but that's what boxing fans saw on December 13 when Showtime brought us the bantamweight brawl between **Abner Mares** and **Vic Darchinyan**, and HBO treated us to the rousing **Amir Khan-Marcos Maidana** encounter. Mares won a hard-fought decision over Darchinyan, while Khan outpointed Maidana. Khan dominated the early rounds and scored a knockdown, but the hard-hitting Maidana nearly kayoed Khan in the 10th and beat him badly in the late rounds. Khan managed to hang on and win on points.

Back in September, **Ricky Burns** suffered a first-round knockdown in his bout with **Roman Martinez**, but he roared back and pounded out a close decision win, hurting Martinez in the 12th round and winning the WBO super featherweight title.

Showtime's "Super Six" has provided us with a number of memorable bouts, but none have been quite as exciting as **Mikkel Kessler's** close and controversial 12-round decision over **Carl Froch** on April 4 in Denmark.

BLOODY BRAWL Soto landed plenty, but Antillon kept coming

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Michael Carbajal and "Chiquita" Gonzalez were junior flyweights when they gave us the Fight of the Year in 1993. Gonzalez and Saman Sorjaturong won the honors in '95. Those bouts may have put the 108-pound division on the map, but no one expected this year's Fight of the Year to involve junior flyweights. They certainly wouldn't expect WBA titlist Giovani Segura and longtime WBO titleholder Ivan Calderon to give us anything comparable to those great fights of the 1990s.

For one thing, Segura was unknown except to the most hardcore of fans. As for Calderon, he'd never been known for excitement. He was a slick boxer, but no warrior. When the bout was announced for a late August pay-per-view, there was no reason to think we'd still be talking about it at the end of 2010.

Of course, the bout featured a Puerto Rican versus a Mexican, which is a rivalry that will always be hot among promoters and fans, and, along with being a title unification bout, THE RING would recognize the winner as champion of the division. But it was still the sort of event that would appeal only to the fight junkies, the sort who doesn't mind devoting a Saturday night to watching a pair of fighters no bigger than jockeys.

Fortunately, those who tuned in were rewarded for their dedication, for what transpired was as close as this year came to producing a bell-to-bell classic.

Segura, younger than Calderon by nearly eight years, and taller by four inches, went on the attack immediately, bombarding Calderon with looping punches. Meanwhile, Calderon dispensed with his usual slick style and responded in the most unusual of ways—he fought back desperately.

Calderon tried to use the ring, but it just wasn't big enough for him to get out of Segura's range. It could've been that Calderon's legs were uncooperative—he was 36, which is about 50 in junior flyweight years—or maybe with a wildman pursuing him, Calderon had no choice but to return fire.

Segura's relentlessness and Calderon's willingness to fight kept the crowd at the Mario Morales Coliseum in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico screaming their approval. Sometimes Calderon connected with legitimate bone-rattlers that would momentarily halt Segura, but the Mexican kept stalking and throwing. At times, both fighters threw furious combinations at each other until their hands looked like a blur of leather. It was spectacular.

Calderon finally fell in the eighth. By then, his eyes were puffy, and he had little left to offer. A barrage of bodyshots followed by a crushing right to the head did him in. Calderon took the 10-count on his knee, but there was nothing shameful about not rising. Known throughout his career as "Iron Boy," Calderon certainly showed some iron on this night and will always be remembered for taking part in our Fight of the Year. ■

ROUND OF THE YEAR

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Juan Manuel Lopez-Bernabe Concepcion,

Monumental rounds have a way of wiping clean everything around them to the point where you can only think of what happened in that spellbinding three-minute sequence.

That's what kind of first-round electricity Juan Manuel Lopez and Bernabe Concepcion generated in July, in San Juan, Puerto Rico. They were both wearing pink for breast cancer awareness, and what unfolded in the opening round was, from a boxing fan's perspective, something pretty.

Lopez was venturing into the featherweight division for just the second time, while Concepcion came into the 126-pound bout with plenty of boxing smarts but little punching power. In fact, he hadn't stopped an opponent in two years.

Nonetheless, Lopez and Concepcion went at each other from the opening bell. Just 54 seconds into the round, Lopez staggered Concepcion with a short left hand flush on the chin, sending him stumbling back into the ropes. Concepcion battled back, landing a right to the body. Concepcion ripped another right into Lopez, who walked through the punch unfazed.

With 1:38 remaining in the round, Lopez popped Concepcion with another left to the chin that sent him down for the first time in his career—and had him hurt.

But just when "JuanMa" seemed like he would make a quick night of it, Concepcion stunned Lopez with a right that momentarily kept the stalking Lopez at bay. And just as Lopez restarted his attack and had Concepcion backed into a corner, hammering him with a fusillade of punches, Concepcion threw a stunner into the equation.

The looping left hook immediately changed the course of the round. It came from out of nowhere and had Lopez down on the canvas, dazed and wondering what just hit him

TAKING AIM
Lopez nails Concepcion with a right in an opening round that saw both fighters knocked down.

Round One

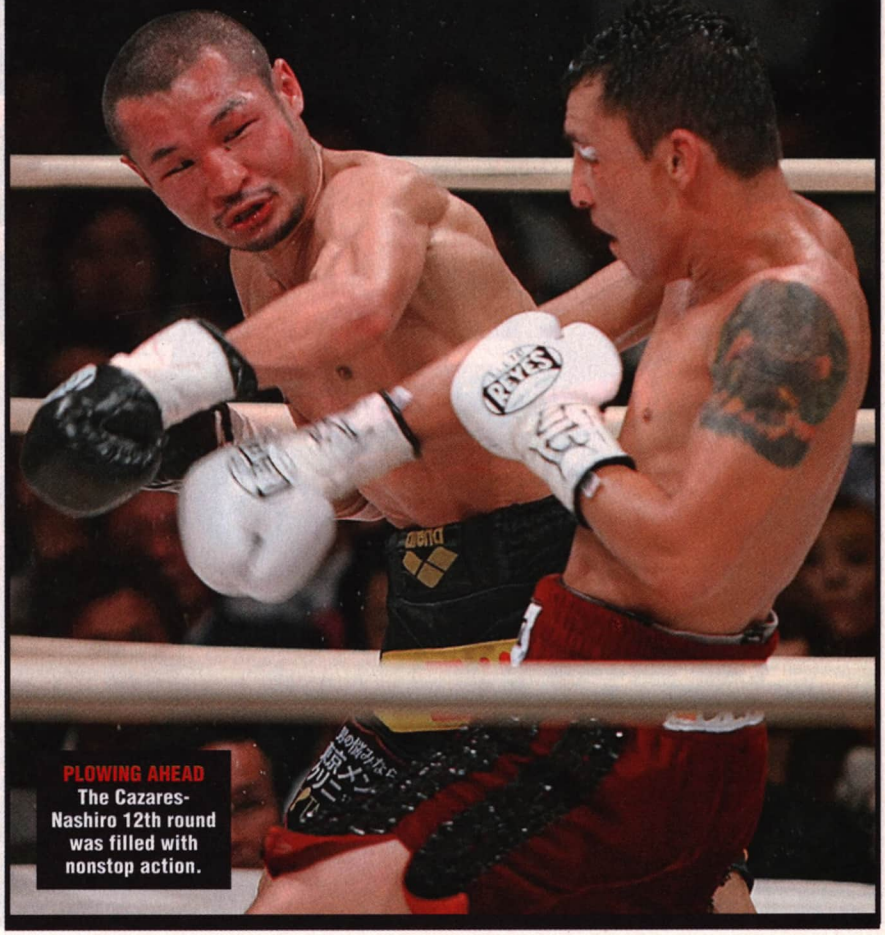
with 17 seconds left in the round. Concepcion is not particularly noted for his devastating left hook, but the punch definitely had JuanMa in trouble. Thankfully for Lopez, referee Luis Pablon took his time counting to eight, and Concepcion had no time left to follow up.

Concepcion's big moment was over, and he took a straight left from Lopez in the first 20 seconds of the second round that sent him down a second time. Lopez finally finished off his brave foe, flooring him a third time, after which the ref called a halt at 2:37 of the round. ■

HONORABLE MENTION

Who says the little guys can't supply enough excitement as boxing's big boys? Try telling that to junior flyweights **Giovani Segura** and **Ivan "Iron Boy" Calderon**. Segura was the aggressor, backing up the defending world champion Calderon. It was more of the same for the first half of the fourth round, when suddenly all hell broke loose. Segura had Calderon against the ropes, winging wide shots to the body, when Calderon unfurled a perfect left to the Segura's head. Then it was on—Calderon and Segura set an inhuman pace the last 90 seconds of the round. Segura was throwing more punches, while Calderon was more accurate … **Juan Manuel Lopez** can't help but be exciting, and the fourth round of his featherweight war with **Rafael Marquez** was no exception. Marquez buckled Lopez' legs with a left hook to the jaw. Lopez gallantly fought back, and it turned into a great give-and-take exchange that made it one of the best rounds of 2010 … Super middleweights **Mikkel Kessler** and **Carl Froch**, both tired and spent, couldn't help but hit each other every time they threw a punch in the 12th round of their "Super Six" battle. Kessler, bleeding over the left eye, won a tight, controversial decision and wrested the WBC belt from Froch in the process … Lightweight world champion **Juan Manual Marquez** usually finds his way onto this list. His defense again **Michael Katsidis** was a fan-friendly shootout, with the third round one of 2010's best, thanks to a crushing left hook from Katsidis that put Marquez down in the first minute of the round. Marquez, known for his incredible ability to recover, got up and was connecting with daunting left hooks before the round was over … **Hugo Cazares** and **Nobuo Nashiro** put on a microcosm of their entire fight by going toe-to-toe for the entire three minutes of the 12th round. Nashiro was going to the head, while Cazares was loading up with left uppercuts to the body. Neither fighter gave way to the other, though Cazares proved to be the more accurate puncher and took the round and the fight.

PHOTO BY JIJI PRESS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



PLOWING AHEAD
The Cazares-Nashiro 12th round was filled with nonstop action.

KNOCKOUT OF THE YEAR

Sergio Martinez KO 2 Paul

The beauty about knockouts is that they can come so unexpectedly and in such a variety of ways. There's actually nothing like it in all of sports. That's why fight fans are drawn like moths to a flame to those violently clean, head-rattling shots. It's because there are no 21-point plays in football, when a team is down by three touchdowns, or a 5-point basket in hoops in the waning seconds of a game, or a 7-run homer in the bottom of the ninth inning in baseball.

But in boxing, one fighter can be down, be dominated almost an entire fight, and suddenly change everything with one punch. The same thing could be said for rectifying mistakes. One punch can bring a very cleansing feeling—righting a perceived wrong.

It was that way when Sergio Martinez deposited Paul Williams on the canvas in the second round at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City in late November. There were many who thought "Maravilla" got the better of Williams, the so-called "Most Avoided Man In Boxing," the first time they met, in December 2009. But Williams was awarded a majority decision, with one judge, Pierre Benoist, scoring it 119-110 for Williams.

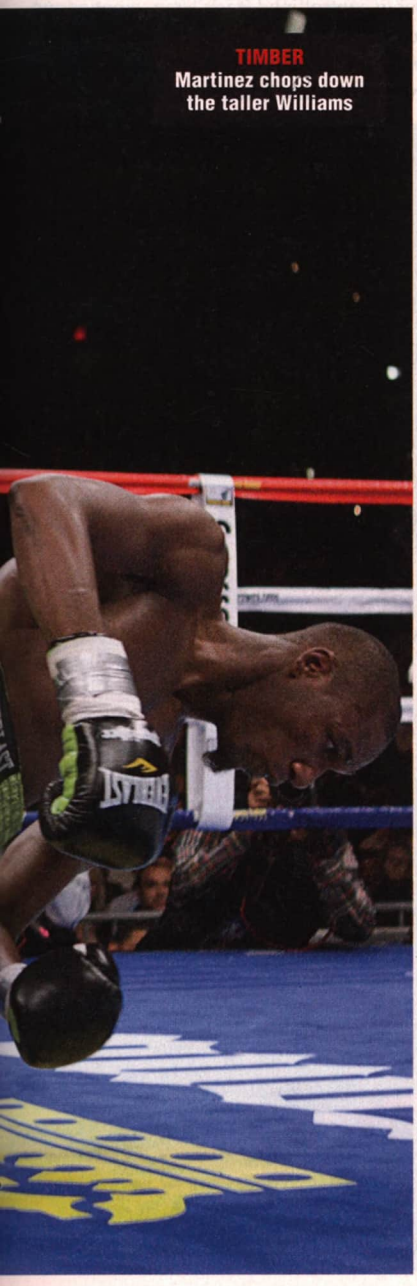
As the final verdict was being read, Martinez shrugged for the HBO cameras

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN/RINGSIDE PHOTOS

Williams

as if to say, *what am I going to do?* But deep down, the Argentinean was fuming inside. He wanted to face Williams again—and he if he got that chance, things would be different, much different.

"That's a big priority for me, getting [Williams] back in the ring again," Martinez told THE RING after beating Kelly Pavlik. "Everyone saw this big smile on my face, and I'll have to admit I was pretty angry about it. You work real hard, you put everything into something, and then get screwed out of a [decision]. If I get him in the ring next time, I'll have to do something. I can't leave it up the judges. I'll just have to take matters into my own hands."



TIMBER
Martinez chops down the taller Williams

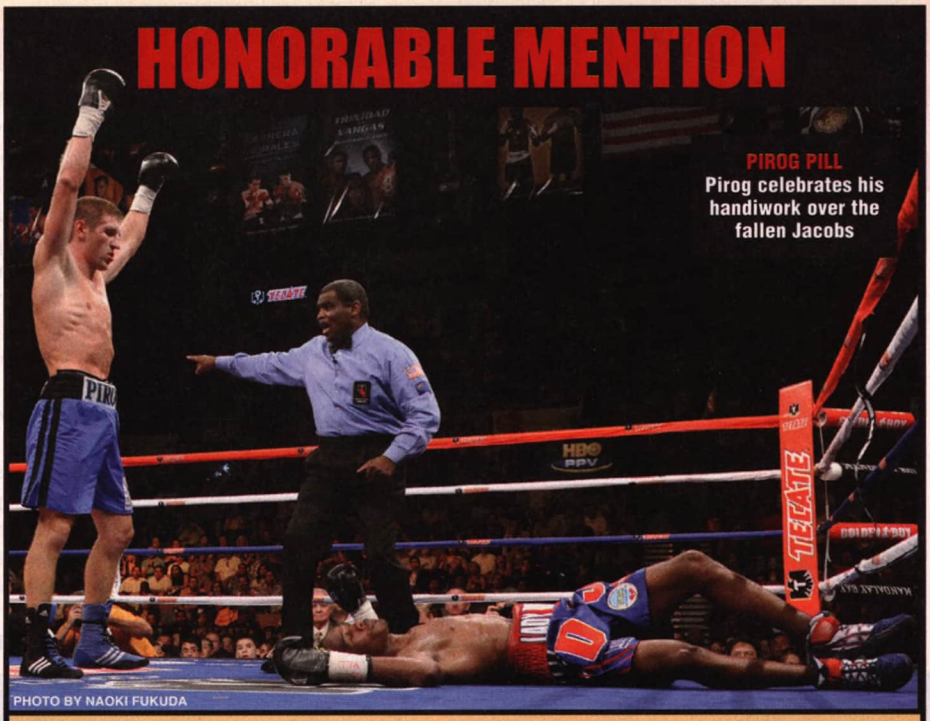
Martinez couldn't have aligned the punch more perfectly. After picking away at the body and getting inside Williams' considerable reach in the first round, Martinez started working the body again in the second. And then—*pow!*—a left landed right on Williams' jaw. For a second, the crowd was stunned.

Williams had no idea what hit him. He dropped back, eyes rolling up into his head, and was out even before he hit the canvas. Just like that, it was over, as referee Earl Morton reached the 10-count then quickly waved the end at the 1:10 mark of the second round.

"We saw something there with Williams we could take advantage of," Martinez said. "I wasn't going to leave it up the judges this time, and my trainer [Gabriel Sarmiento] put me in the right position to knock him out. I don't think many people expected me to knock him out. We saw this coming."

And it was sweet. Like all Knockouts of the Year. ■

HONORABLE MENTION



PIROG PILL
Pirog celebrates his handiwork over the fallen Jacobs

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

No one knew much about middleweight **Dmitry Pirog**, other than he had a spotless record built in Russia. **Daniel Jacobs**, a hot New York prospect, was the "name fighter" with the accolades. They fought on the undercard of the late July Juan Manuel Marquez-Juan Diaz Las Vegas rematch. One punch changed that perception fast, thanks to Pirog's thunderous right hand that landed squarely on Jacobs' jaw, putting him to sleep at 0:57 of the fifth round. Marquez decisioned Diaz in what was a far less exciting fight than their first meeting, so Pirog was all anyone was talking about by the end of the night.

Alfredo Angulo is becoming a regular on this list. In 2009, he dispensed of Harry Joe Yorgey, and, in 2010, he returns courtesy of a looping right that found a home right on the chin of **Joel Julio** at 1:39 of the 11th round.

There's a good reason why IBF super middleweight titlist **Lucian Bute** is a fan favorite in Quebec City, Canada—he knocks people out. In mid-April, Bute supplied enough volts to the head of **Edison Miranda** with a gorgeous left uppercut that sent Miranda sprawling down on all fours at 1:22 of the third round. Junior middleweight **Saul Alvarez** already has an incredible Mexican fanbase, and expect more American fight fans to become familiar with him after seeing him on the Shane Mosley-Sergio Mora undercard. Alvarez finished former world welterweight champion **Carlos Baldomir**, who had his brain short-circuited by an Alvarez left hook on the chin at 2:58 of the sixth round. Sometimes knockouts come with added work. **Devon Alexander** hit **Juan Urango** so hard with a right on the side of the head that a concussed Urango fell on Alexander, who slung off his opponent, who was counted out at 1:22 of the eighth round in a junior welterweight title unification fight. Keep an eye on rising junior welterweight prospect **Tim Coleman**, whose devastating from-the-waist right uppercut not only dropped **Patrick Lopez** once, but twice, when Lopez tried getting up and landed in his own corner stunned on his knees at 2:13 of the third round.

UPSET OF THE YEAR

Jason Litzau W 10 Celestino

Why was Jason Litzau given such little chance going into his bout with Celestino Caballero? He was a 13-1 underdog, and, while those aren't exactly Douglas-Tyson numbers, they were wide enough that some smart fellows at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas could've made a killing if they'd had the cajones to bet on "The American Boy."

It wouldn't have been a terrible bet if you had some cash to burn. After all, Litzau was the naturally bigger man and was quite a bit younger. The word against him was that he hadn't been in with enough stellar opposition to prepare him for a fighter like Caballero.

Caballero had owned a pair of alphabet belts at super bantamweight and had become one of those cultish fighters that boxing geeks like to namedrop. The bout, fought at junior lightweight, was a chance for Caballero to not only test himself in a higher weight class, but to fight for an HBO audience tuning in for the Juan Manuel Marquez-Michael Katsidis main event. If all went according to plan, boxing fans and HBO's programmers would be so impressed that there'd be a demand for Caballero to face a "JuanMa" Lopez or someone of that ilk. Litzau, it seemed, was only there as Caballero's doormat to bigger fights.

But no one told Litzau any of this. If they did, he wasn't paying attention.

Litzau pressed the action from the start, staying in Caballero's face and landing good punches on the inside. Caballero kept the rounds close and difficult to score, but he had trouble controlling Litzau's raw emotion and energy. Technically, it was a close fight. Visually, though, it was all Litzau. Some have argued that Litzau received too much

PHOTO NAOKI FUKUDA

Caballero

credit for punches that looked dramatic but weren't particularly effective. Still, Litzau grew more confident with every round, and, during the ninth, he landed a left that made Caballero's legs buckle.

Caballero recovered, but he may have been feeling his age at 34; he later claimed that fighting at a career high of 130 made him feel sluggish. Caballero may also have been regretting some nasty comments he made about Litzau that surfaced on YouTube prior to the bout.

By the time the bell ended the 10th, there was a sense that something unexpected had taken place. Judge Al Lefkowitz thought Caballero had done enough, scoring the bout 96-94 for the Panamanian, but judges Glenn Trowbridge and Dave Moretti tilted the bout towards Litzau, 97-93, and 96-94, respectively.

AGAINST THE ODDS
Prohibitive underdog Litzau has Caballero backing up en route to a 10-round decision over highly favored Caballero. It was the biggest win of "The American Boy's" career.

HONORABLE MENTION

PHOTO BY KAZUHIRO NOGI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

ROLE REVERSAL
Thirteen-fight novice Uchiyama rocks defending titleholder Salgado (2009's Upset of the Year winner) with a left. The Japanese unexpectedly took the title via 12th-round TKO.

The upsets came in two categories this year. First were the upsets scored by unknown and inexperienced fighters. Then there was the other type, which involved journeymen overcoming their less than sparkling records to pull off unlikely victories.

Category one featured upsets by unknowns like **Dmitry Pirog** of Russia, who faced undefeated **Daniel Jacobs** for a vacant WBO belt and scored a stunning TKO in five, and **Kaizer Mabuza**, who'd rarely fought outside of South Africa but shocked Atlantic City fans by battering tough **Kendall Holt** until Holt's corner stopped the bout before the seventh round.

Jean Pascal wasn't exactly a rookie when he faced light heavyweight titlist **Chad Dawson**, but he was hardly known outside of Quebec. Pascal won a technical decision and THE RING belt when Dawson was badly cut in the 11th round, causing the fight to go to the scorecards.

We'd have to include **Garth Wood**, who only started boxing in 2007. He had won Australian TV's version of *The Contender* belt in 2010, but no one expected him to whip Aussie star **Anthony Mundine** in five, which is exactly what he did.

Ryol Li Lee, with only 19 bouts to his credit, scored a major upset by earning a close decision over the acclaimed veteran **Poonsawat Kratindaengym** for the WBA super bantamweight title.

Takashi Uchiyama had only 13 professional bouts on his ledger but was able to kayo **Juan Carlos Salgado** in 12 for the WBA super featherweight belt. Salgado learned that what goes around comes around, for he was the winner of last year's biggest upset, when he kayoed **Jorge Linares** in one.

Then there were the journeymen, like **Gilberto Keb-Baas** who had 20 losses on his record when he faced WBC junior flyweight titlist **Omar Nino** but went on to score two knockdowns and win the belt via majority decision, and **Juan Rosas**, who lost five fights during a two-year stretch between '06 and '08 but scored a sixth round stoppage of IBF super flyweight titlist **Simphiwe Nongqayi**.

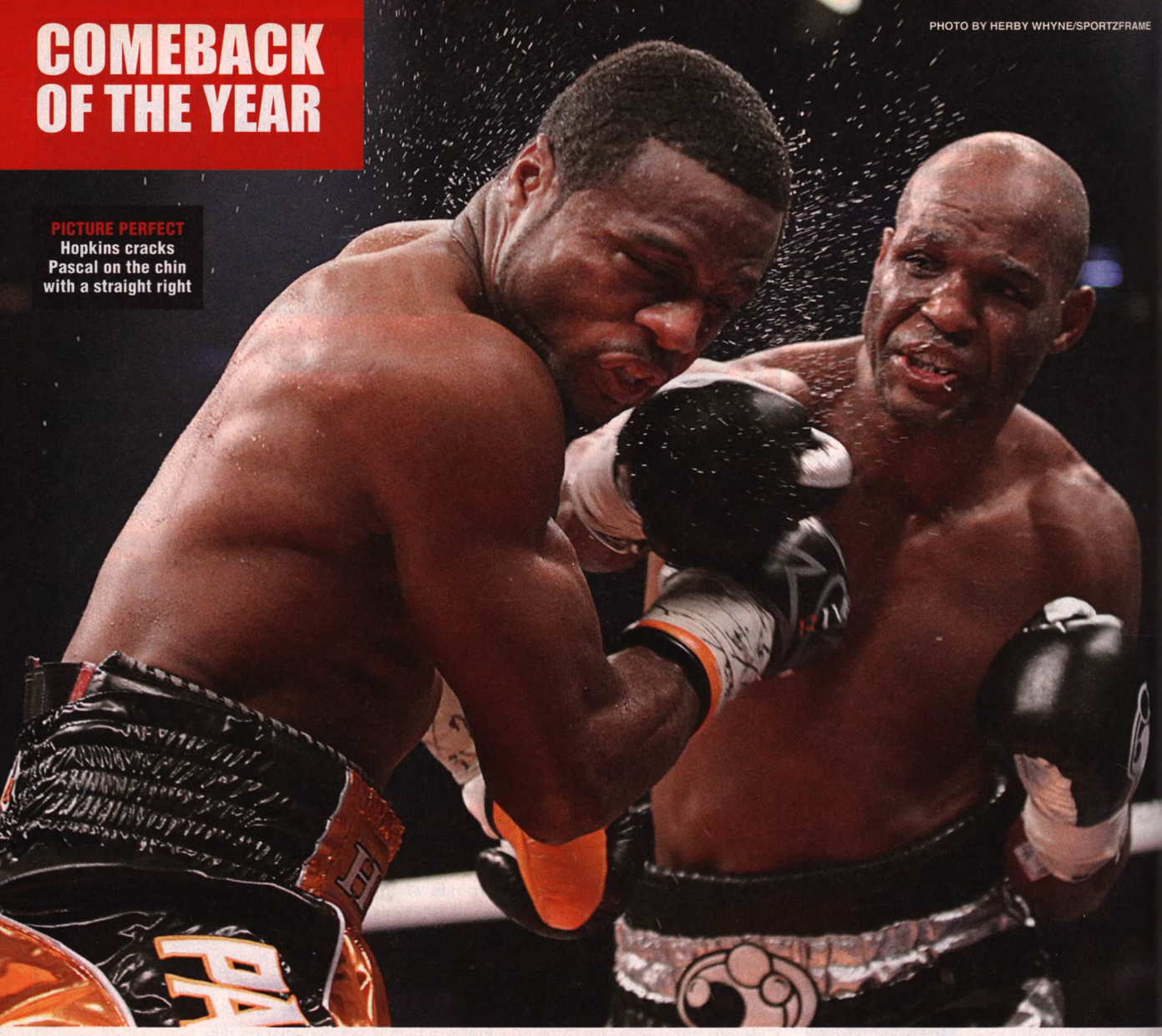
The Cinderella stories continued with **Cornelius "K9" Bundrage**, who always seemed to lose the big ones but won the IBF junior middleweight title by stopping **Cory Spinks** in five.

Some feel Caballero ruined his future by failing on such a big stage, while others think he'll be back. Some feel Litzau is on his way up, but some think the win was a fluke, simply a case of Caballero blowing an opportunity.

The one thing everyone agrees on is that Litzau's win was one hell of an upset. ■

COMEBACK OF THE YEAR

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME



PICTURE PERFECT
Hopkins cracks Pascal on the chin with a straight right

Bernard Hopkins

Living legend Bernard Hopkins appeared to be fading since his marvelous victory over Kelly Pavlik in 2008. Inactive for more than a year, he looked jaded hammering out a 12-round decision over former sparring partner Enrique Ornelas in his only bout in 2009. His first fight in 2010, against old rival Roy Jones, was perhaps the worst performance of B-Hop's Hall of Fame career. True, he won a unanimous 12-round decision, but it was an ugly, foul-filled affair, made even worse by the fact that Jones had been knocked out in one round by Danny Green in his previous fight.

Although Hopkins had the satisfaction of avenging a 1993 loss to Jones, even Richard Schaefer, CEO of Golden Boy Promotions, with which Hopkins is affiliated, suggested that it might be time for "The Executioner" to consider retiring.

Naturally, Hopkins did not agree and vowed to fight on. But it wasn't until Jean Pascal called him out following the Canadian's victory over Chad Dawson for the vacant RING 175-pound world championship that Hopkins had a viable fight. Not only was it a chance to regain the belt he'd lost to Joe Calzaghe in 2008, it was also an opportunity to eclipse George Foreman and become the oldest fighter ever to win a major world championship.

Judging by his recent performances, it seemed possible that Hopkins might suffer a career-ending loss to the 28-year-old Pascal. But, as everybody should have learned years ago, it's foolish to underestimate a fighter as unique as Hopkins, a man who repeatedly defies the laws of nature.

The Pascal fight did not get off to a very auspicious start for the 45-year-old Philadelphian (who turned 46 on January 15), as Pascal scored knockdowns in the first and third rounds. But from the fourth round on, Hopkins mounted an amazing comeback. It started the moment he began

HONORABLE MENTION

Former light heavyweight champion **Glen Johnson** made a significant comeback by moving down to super middleweight and knocking out **Allan Green** to earn a spot in the semifinals of the "Super Six" tournament.

Sergio Martinez, who went 0-1-1 in 2009, losing a close decision to **Paul Williams** and fighting a draw with Kermit Cintron, bounced back in 2010 to have the best year of his career, winning the world middleweight championship from **Kelly Pavlik** and defending it with a electrifying second round, one-punch kayo of Williams.

The career of **Cornelius Bundrage** floundered after his appearance on the second season of *The Contender* and he was virtually a forgotten man when he got the opportunity to challenge **Cory Spinks** for the IBF junior middleweight title. The 37-year-old Bundrage took full advantage of his second chance at glory and stopped Spinks in the fifth round to win a belt and rejuvenate his career.

After losing the WBC featherweight strap to Elio Rojas in 2009, **Takahiro Ao** rebounded by moving up to the 130-pound division and winning the WBC title with a unanimous 12-round decision over **Vitali Tajbert**.

Following three straight loses, **Christian Mijares** went on a five-fight winning streak that culminated with the capturing of the IBF junior bantamweight title from **Juan Alberto Rosas** in December 2010.

UNDER FIRE
Johnson attacks Green shortly before knocking him out

PHOTO BY RAY KASPROWICZ

to land wicked left hooks to Pascal's body. Suddenly, the expression on Pascal's face changed, and be began to retreat more and punch less.

Gradually, Hopkins took charge of the fight. Pascal appeared genuinely hurt by the body attack, and, when trainer Naazim Richardson told Hopkins between the sixth and seventh rounds to open up, the old dog stepped on the gas, mixing in hard rights to the head along with a steady diet of bodyshots.

Pascal fought back effectively in the eighth, but couldn't keep it up. Hopkins shook him with clean right hands in the ninth and hurt him again in the 11th round with left hooks to the body. Both men staged a grandstand finish in the 12th, standing their ground and letting their punches fly. It was the best two-way action of the fight, but, at the sound of the final bell, it was Hopkins who wore the look of a winner, while Pascal looked understandably worried.

One judge scored it for Hopkins, but the other two had it even, which allowed Pascal to retain the title via majority draw.

Although denied the verdict that many observers thought he deserved, Hopkins' astonishing performance, as compared to what had preceded it, was worthy of Comeback of the Year. ■

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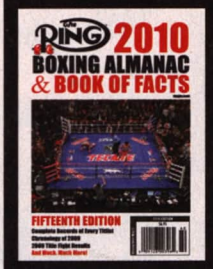

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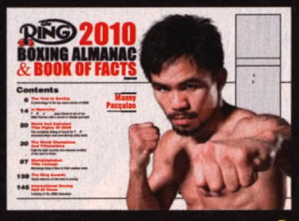

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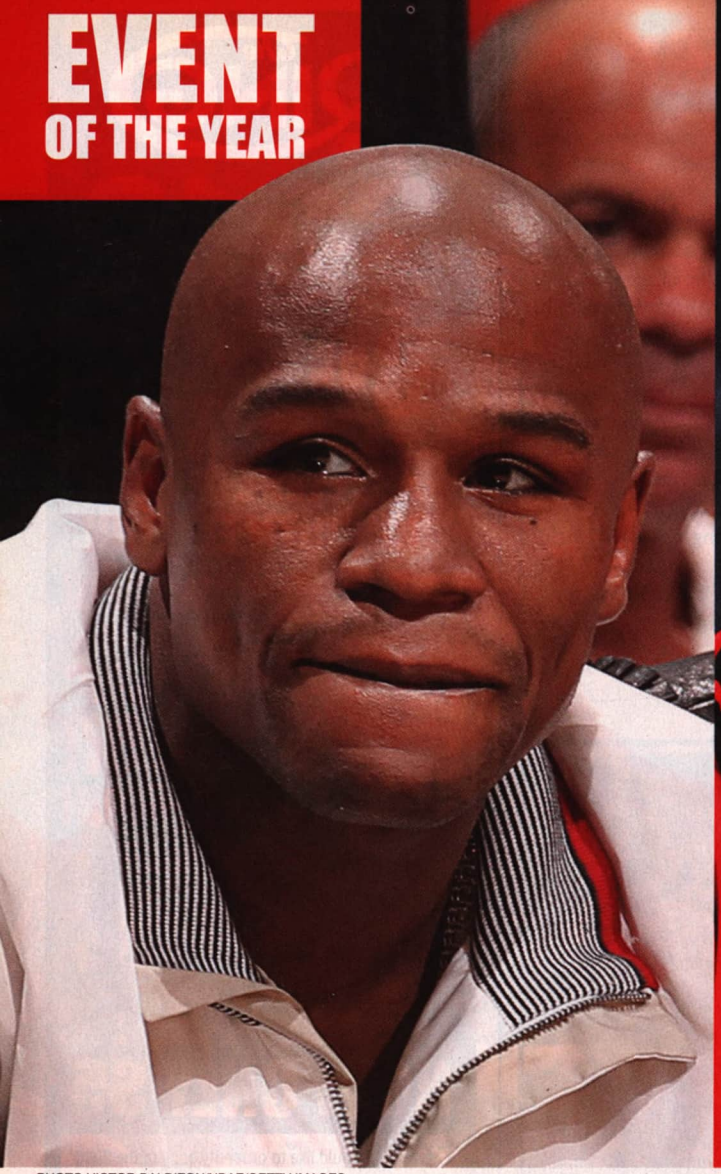
EVENT OF THE YEAR



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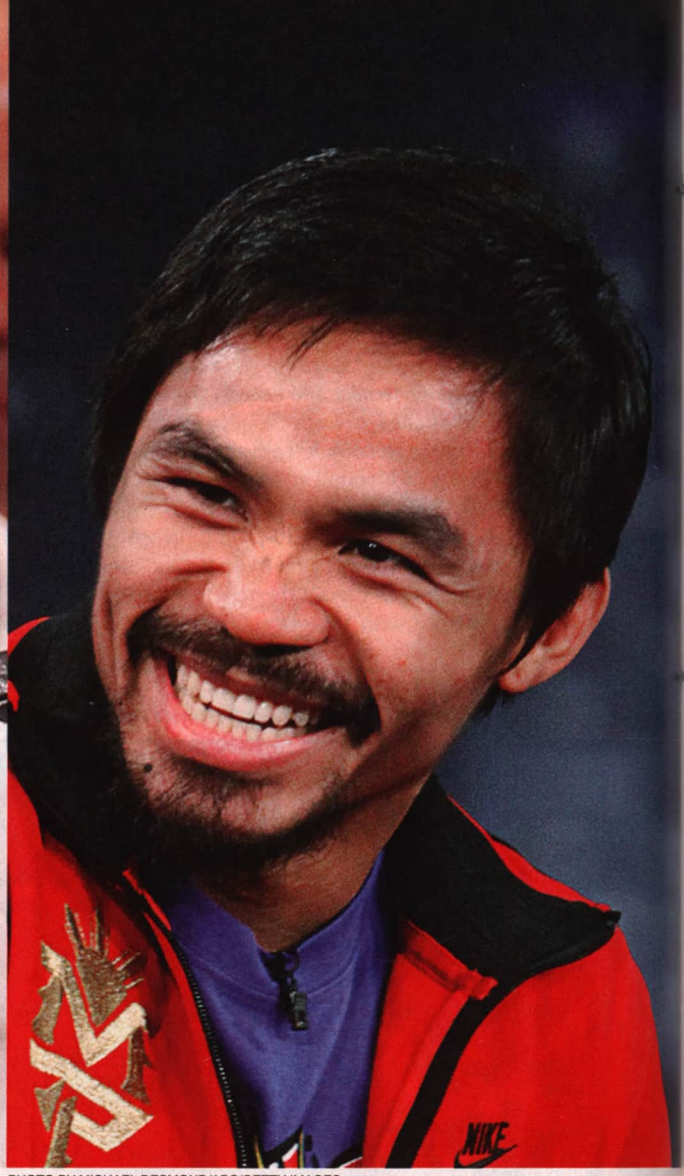


PHOTO BY MICHAEL DESMOND/ABC/GETTY IMAGES

The Failure To Make Mayweather-Pacquiao

If any doubts existed as to the magnitude of a bout between Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather, just consider the year-long uproar created by its cancellation.

The fight was on the verge of being made late in 2009, only to be derailed when Pacquiao wouldn't agree to Mayweather's demand for Olympic style drug-testing. Strangely, Pacquiao was opposed to any testing within 30-days of the fight. Pacquiao's trainer Freddie Roach claimed Pacquiao was concerned that having blood drawn so close to the fight might weaken him, but boxing fans had trouble understanding Pacquiao's fear. After all, Pacquiao-Mayweather was destined to be the richest fight in history. How could Pacquiao pass it up over drug testing?

After a mediation process, Mayweather agreed to a 14-day no blood-testing window. However, Pacquiao countered by demanding a no blood-testing window of 24 days. By January 7, the fight was off and Pacquiao was hitting Mayweather with a defamation lawsuit for suggesting he was a steroid user.

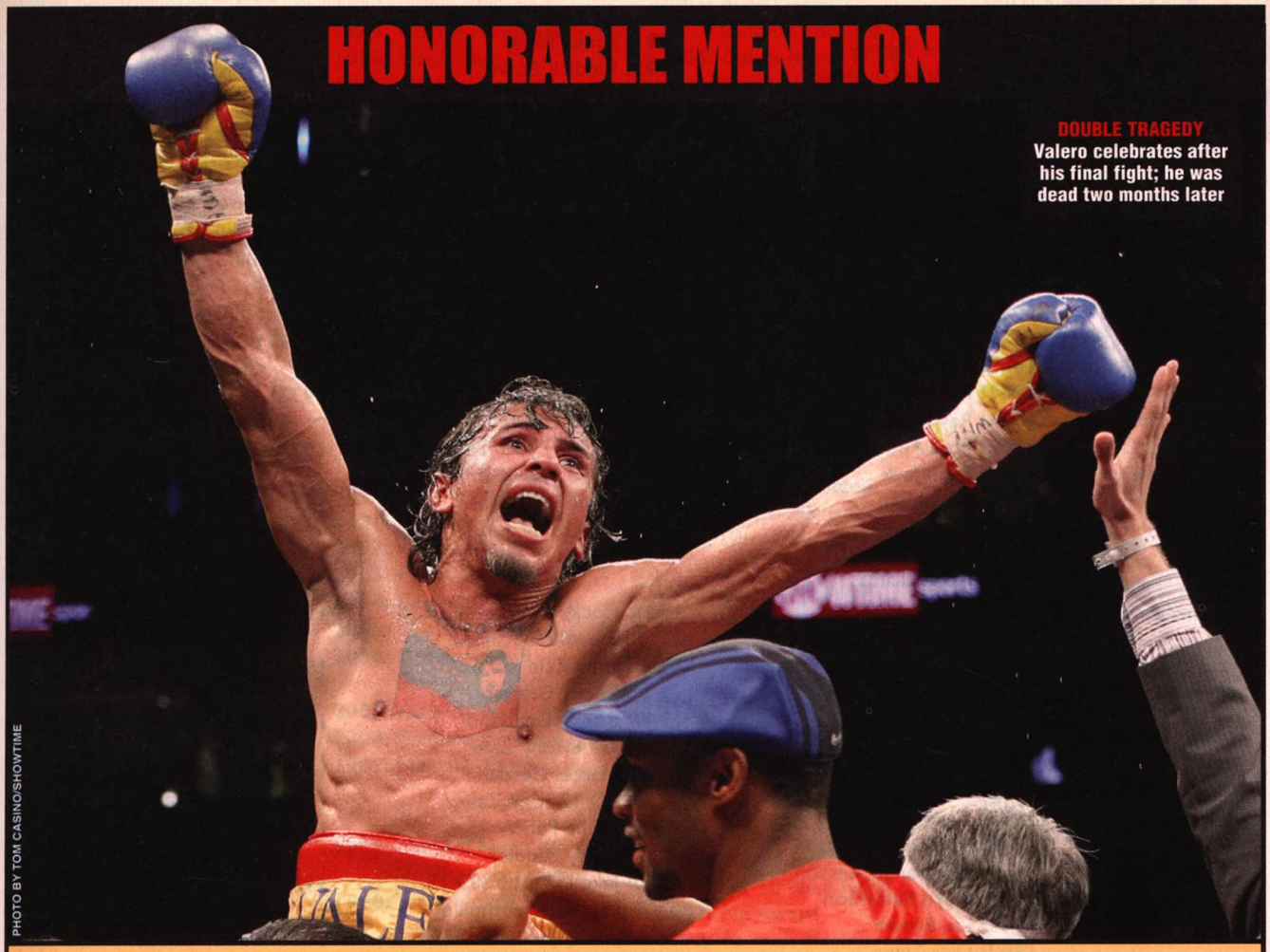
Rumors, theories, and opinions flew. That such a big fight would disintegrate over a matter of needles made the story all the more intriguing. Many felt Pacquiao simply should've agreed to Mayweather's wishes, but just as many felt it wasn't Mayweather's place to dictate testing procedures. Some felt Pacquiao and Mayweather were simply two stubborn fighters not willing to give ground to the other, while an increasing segment of fandom and the media believed Mayweather never intended to fight in the first place. To the disappointment of all, Pacquiao and Mayweather ended up facing other opponents.

Interest in the bout spiked again during the summer when promoters from both camps announced that an agreement was close to being reached. Pacquiao promoter Bob Arum gave Mayweather a two-week deadline to sign for a November bout. This time, Mayweather balked.

Mayweather's team denied that any negotiations had taken place, but HBO's Ross Greenburg announced that he had indeed been acting as a mediator between Arum and Mayweather's advisor, Leonard Ellerbe. Mayweather's only comment was that he had fought Shane Mosley just two months earlier and didn't want to take another fight so soon.

More rumors surfaced in August when Mayweather seemed to be forging a relationship with promoter Don King. Many be-

HONORABLE MENTION



DOUBLE TRAGEDY
Valero celebrates after his final fight; he was dead two months later

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

It seemed like anything **Manny Pacquiao** did in 2010 was an event, whether he was pummeling an opponent on a million-selling pay-per-view or appearing on Jimmy Kimmel's show to sing a duet with Will Ferrell. But the biggest event of Manny's year was being elected to the Philippine congress. In May, he was proclaimed congressman of the district of Sarangani after scoring a landslide victory over the wealthy and politically connected Roy Chiongbian, whose family had been in power for more than 30 years.

Pacquiao played a part in another of 2010's big events, namely the return of boxing to stadiums. Pacquiao turned Cowboys Stadium into his personal stage, whipping **Joshua Clottey** and **Antonio Margarito** before combined crowds of around 80,000 fans. With a gigantic hi-def screen hovering over the festivities, people in the cheapest seats could see Pacquiao's handiwork. Joining Pacquiao in the rebirth of stadium boxing was **Miguel Cotto**, who beat **Yuri Foreman** in Yankee Stadium's first boxing event in three decades, and heavyweight champion **Wladimir Klitschko**, whose win over Eddie Chambers in Germany's Esprit Arena drew over 51,000 fans.

Antonio Margarito made his first ring appearance after his loaded glove scandal of last year. Still maintaining his innocence, Margarito resumed his career with a decision win over Robert Garcia and a resounding loss to Pacquiao.

Floyd Mayweather was arrested when his ex-girlfriend, Josie Harris, pressed charges that the fighter had stolen her mobile phone. After Mayweather posted $3,000 bail, more charges were added, including charges of domestic battery and harassment. If convicted of all charges, Mayweather could face up to 34 years in prison. It's doubtful that he'll spend any time behind bars, but the legal drama will take him away from boxing for a while.

In April, WBC lightweight titlist **Edwin Valero** was arrested and charged with murdering his wife. He then committed suicide in a Venezuelan jail.

British tabloid *News of the World* exposed two of the United Kingdom's biggest stars, **Ricky Hatton** and **Joe Calzaghe**, as cocaine users. Calzaghe, caught in an undercover operation in March, apologized in the press but downplayed his drug use. Hatton, photographed and videotaped during a September binge, headed for rehab.

On a more pleasant note, **THE RING** announced plans to offer a digital edition of the magazine online.

lieved that if anyone could broker a deal for the big fight, it was wily old King. This "partnership" amounted to nothing, though, and the next time we saw Mayweather was in September, when he appeared in a ridiculous Internet clip taunting Pacquiao with racially tinged insults.

By December, with Mayweather's personal problems mounting, and Pacquiao looking elsewhere for opponents, the superfight of the era was no closer to happening. Still, the potential fight remains the sport's biggest focal point. Its collapse was THE RING's top choice for Event of the Year. ■

PAST WINNERS

FIGHTER Of The Year

1928: Gene Tunney
1929: Tommy Loughran
1930: Max Schmeling
1931: Tommy Loughran
1932: Jack Sharkey
1933: No Award
1934: Tony Canzoneri/Barney Ross
1935: Barney Ross
1936: Joe Louis
1937: Henry Armstrong
1938: Joe Louis
1939: Joe Louis
1940: Billy Conn
1941: Joe Louis
1942: Ray Robinson
1943: Fred Apostoli
1944: Beau Jack
1945: Willie Pep
1946: Tony Zale
1947: Gus Lesnevich
1948: Ike Williams
1949: Ezzard Charles
1950: Ezzard Charles
1951: Ray Robinson
1952: Rocky Marciano
1953: Bobo Olson
1954: Rocky Marciano
1955: Rocky Marciano
1956: Floyd Patterson
1957: Carmen Basilio
1958: Ingemar Johansson
1959: Ingemar Johansson
1960: Floyd Patterson
1961: Joe Brown
1962: Dick Tiger
1963: Cassius Clay
1964: Emile Griffith
1965: Dick Tiger
1966: No Award
1967: Joe Frazier
1968: Nino Benvenuti
1969: Jose Napoles
1970: Joe Frazier
1971: Joe Frazier
1972: Muhammad Ali/ Carlos Monzon
1973: George Foreman
1974: Muhammad Ali
1975: Muhammad Ali
1976: George Foreman
1977: Carlos Zarate
1978: Muhammad Ali
1979: Ray Leonard
1980: Thomas Hearns
1981: Ray Leonard/ Salvador Sanchez
1982: Larry Holmes
1983: Marvin Hagler
1984: Thomas Hearns
1985: Marvin Hagler/Donald Curry
1986: Mike Tyson
1987: Evander Holyfield
1988: Mike Tyson
1989: Pernell Whitaker
1990: Julio Cesar Chavez
1991: James Toney
1992: Riddick Bowe
1993: Michael Carbajal
1994: Roy Jones
1995: Oscar De La Hoya
1996: Evander Holyfield
1997: Evander Holyfield
1998: Floyd Mayweather
1999: Paulie Ayala
2000: Felix Trinidad
2001: Bernard Hopkins
2002: Vernon Forrest
2003: James Toney
2004: Glen Johnson
2005: Ricky Hatton
2006: Manny Pacquiao
2007: Floyd Mayweather
2008: Manny Pacquiao
2009: Manny Pacquiao

FIGHT Of The Year

1945: Rocky Graziano KO 10 Freddie Cochrane
1946: Tony Zale KO 6 Rocky Graziano
1947: Rocky Graziano KO 6 Tony Zale
1948: Marcel Cerdan KO 12 Tony Zale
1949: Willie Pep W 15 Sandy Saddler
1950: Jake LaMotta KO 15 Laurent Dauthuille
1951: Jersey Joe Walcott KO 7 Ezzard Charles
1952: Rocky Marciano KO 13 Jersey Joe Walcott
1953: Rocky Marciano KO 11 Roland LaStarza
1954: Rocky Marciano KO 8 Ezzard Charles
1955: Carmen Basilio KO 12 Tony DeMarco
1956: Carmen Basilio KO 9 Johnny Saxton
1957: Carmen Basilio W 15 Ray Robinson
1958: Ray Robinson W 15 Carmen Basilio
1959: Gene Fullmer KO 14 Carmen Basilio
1960: Floyd Patterson KO 5 Ingemar Johansson
1961: Joe Brown W 15 Dave Charnley
1962: Joey Giardello W 10 Henry Hank
1963: Cassius Clay W 10 Doug Jones
1964: Cassius Clay KO 7 Sonny Liston
1965: Floyd Patterson W 12 George Chuvalo
1966: Jose Torres W 15 Eddie Cotton
1967: Nino Benvenuti W 15 Emile Griffith
1968: Dick Tiger W 10 Frank DePaula
1969: Joe Frazier KO 7 Jerry Quarry
1970: Carlos Monzon KO 12 Nino Benvenuti
1971: Joe Frazier W 15 Muhammad Ali
1972: Bob Foster KO 14 Chris Finnegan
1973: George Foreman KO 2 Joe Frazier
1974: Muhammad Ali KO 8 George Foreman
1975: Muhammad Ali KO 14 Joe Frazier
1976: George Foreman KO 5 Ron Lyle
1977: Jimmy Young W 12 George Foreman
1978: Leon Spinks W 15 Muhammad Ali
1979: Danny Lopez KO 15 Mike Ayala
1980: Matthew Saad Muhammad KO 14 Yaqui Lopez
1981: Sugar Ray Leonard KO 14 Thomas Hearns
1982: Bobby Chacon W 15 Bazooka Limon
1983: Bobby Chacon W 12 Cornelius Boza-Edwards
1984: Jose Luis Ramirez KO 4 Edwin Rosario
1985: Marvin Hagler KO 3 Thomas Hearns
1986: Steve Cruz W 15 Barry McGuigan
1987: Sugar Ray Leonard W 12 Marvin Hagler
1988: Tony Lopez W 12 Rocky Lockridge
1989: Roberto Duran W 12 Iran Barkley
1990: Julio Cesar Chavez KO 12 Meldrick Taylor
1991: Robert Quiroga W 12 Akeem Anifowoshe
1992: Riddick Bowe W 12 Evander Holyfield
1993: Michael Carbajal KO 7 Chiquita Gonzalez
1994: Jorge Castro KO 9 John David Jackson
1995: Saman Sorjaturong KO 7 Chiquita Gonzalez
1996: Evander Holyfield KO 11 Mike Tyson
1997: Arturo Gatti KO 5 Gabriel Ruelas

1998: Ivan Robinson W 10 Arturo Gatti
1999: Paulie Ayala W 12 Johnny Tapia
2000: Erik Morales W 12 Marco Antonio Barrera
2001: Micky Ward W 10 Emanuel Burton
2002: Micky Ward W 10 Arturo Gatti
2003: Arturo Gatti W 10 Micky Ward
2004: Marco Antonio Barrera W 12 Erik Morales
2005: Diego Corrales KO 10 Jose Luis Castillo
2006: Somsak Sithchatchawal KO 10 Mahyar Monshipour
2007: Israel Vazquez KO 6 Rafael Marquez
2008: Israel Vazquez W 12 Rafael Marquez
2009: Juan Manuel Marquez KO 9 Juan Diaz

ROUND Of The Year

1945: Joyce-Williams, 12
1946: Zale-Graziano, 6
1947: Louis-Walcott, 4
1948: Louis-Walcott, 11
1949: Graziano-Fusari, 10
1950: LaMotta-Dauthuille, 15
1951: Marciano-Louis, 8
1952: Marciano-Walcott, 13
1953: Gavilan-Basilio, 2
1954: Moore-Johnson, 14
1955: Moore-Olson, 3
1956: Robinson-Olson, 4
1957: Robinson-Fullmer, 5
1958: Johansson-Machen, 1
1959: Johansson-Patterson, 3
1960: Patterson-Johansson, 5
1961: Patterson-Johansson, 1
1962: Liston-Patterson, 1
1963: Liston-Patterson, 1
1964: Torres-Olson, 1
1965: Torres-Pastrano, 6
1966: Ortiz-Ramos, 5
1967: Tiger-Rouse, 12
1968: Foster-Tiger, 4
1969: Benvenuti-Rodriguez, 11
1970: Ali-Bonavena, 15
1971: Frazier-Ali, 15
1972: Ali-Foster, 5
1973: Foreman-Frazier, 2
1974: Ali-Foreman, 8
1975: Ali-Frazier, 12
1976: Foreman-Lyle, 4 & 5
1977: Young-Foreman, 12
1978: Spinks-Ali, 15
1979: Franklin-Johnson, 8
1980: Saad Muhammad-Lopez, 8
1981: Lee-LoCicero, 5
1982: Gomez-Pintor, 3
1983: Holmes-Witherspoon, 9
1984: Meza-Garza, 1
1985: Hagler-Hearns, 1
1986: Cruz-McGuigan, 15
1987: Seabrooks-Jacob, 1
1988: Tyson-Spinks, 1
1989: Gutierrez-Franklin, 12
1990: Davis-Breland, 9
1991: No Award
1992: Bowe-Holyfield, 10
1993: Norris-Waters, 2
1994: Castro-Jackson, 9
1995: Sorjaturong-Gonzalez, 7
1996: Liles-Littles, 3
1997: Gatti-Ruelas, 5
1998: Robinson-Gatti II, 3
1999: De La Hoya-Quartey, 6
2000: Morales-Barrera, 5
2001: Hopkins-Trinidad, 10
2002: Ward-Gatti I, 9
2003: Freitas-Barrios, 11
2004: Barrera-Morales III, 11
2005: Corrales-Castillo I, 10
2006: Sithchatchawal-Monshipour, 10
2007: Vazquez-Marquez II, 3
2008: Vazquez-Marquez III, 4
2009: Maidana-Ortiz, 1

KNOCKOUT Of The Year

1989: Michael Nunn KO 1 Sumbu Kalambay
1990: Terry Norris KO 1 John Mugabi
1991: No Award
1992: Kennedy McKinney KO 11 Welcome Ncita/ Morris East KO 11 Akinobu Hiranaka
1993: Gerald McClellan KO 5 Julian Jackson
1994: George Foreman KO 10 Michael Moorer
1995: Julio Cesar Vasquez KO 11 Carl Daniels
1996: Wilfredo Vasquez KO 11 Eloy Rojas
1997: Arturo Gatti KO 5 Gabriel Ruelas
1998: Roy Jones KO 4 Virgil Hill
1999: Derrick Jefferson KO 6 Maurice Harris
2000: Ben Tackie KO 10 Roberto Garcia
2001: Lennox Lewis KO 4 Hasim Rahman
2002: Lennox Lewis KO 8 Mike Tyson
2003: Rocky Juarez KO 10 Antonio Diaz
2004: Antonio Tarver KO 2 Roy Jones
2005: Allan Green KO 1 Jaidon Codrington
2006: Calvin Brock KO 6 Zuri Lawrence
2007: Nonito Donaire KO 5 Vic Darchinyan
2008: Edison Miranda KO 3 David Banks
2009: Manny Pacquiao KO 2 Ricky Hatton

UPSET Of The Year

1980: Yasutsune Uehara KO 6 Sammy Serrano
1981: Roger Stafford W 10 Pipino Cuevas
1982: Kirkland Laing W 10 Roberto Duran
1983: Gerrie Coetzee KO 10 Michael Dokes
1984: Gene Hatcher KO 11 Johnny Bumphus
1985: Michael Spinks W 15 Larry Holmes
1986: Lloyd Honeyghan KO 6 Donald Curry
1987: Sugar Ray Leonard W 12 Marvin Hagler
1988: Iran Barkley KO 3 Thomas Hearns
1989: Rene Jacquot W 12 Donald Curry
1990: Buster Douglas KO 10 Mike Tyson
1991: No Award
1992: Azumah Nelson KO 8 Jeff Fenech
1993: Simon Brown KO 4 Terry Norris
1994: Vuyani Bungu W 12 Kennedy McKinney
1995: Willy Salazar KO 7 Danny Romero
1996: Evander Holyfield KO 11 Mike Tyson
1997: Vince Phillips KO 10 Kostya Tszyu
1998: Ivan Robinson W 10 Arturo Gatti
1999: Willy Wise W 10 Julio Cesar Chavez
2000: Jose Luis Castillo W 12 Steve Johnston
2001: Hasim Rahman KO 5 Lennox Lewis
2002: Juan Carlos Rubio W 10 Francisco Bojado
2003: Corrie Sanders KO 2 Wladimir Klitschko
2004: Glen Johnson KO 9 Roy Jones
2005: Zahir Raheem W 12 Erik Morales
2006: Carlos Baldomir W 12 Zab Judah
2007: Nonito Donaire KO 5 Vic Darchinyan
2008: Bernard Hopkins W 12 Kelly Pavlik
2009: Juan Carlos Salgado KO 1 Jorge Linares

COMEBACK Of The Year

1980: Shoji Oguma
1981: Jimmy Young
1982: Bobby Chacon
1983: Roberto Duran
1984: Marvin Johnson
1985: Lupe Pintor
1986: Edwin Rosario
1987: Frankie Duarte
1988: Michael Dokes
1989: Roberto Duran
1990: Tony Lopez
1991: Vinny Pazienza
1992: Iran Barkley
1993: Zack Padilla
1994: George Foreman
1995: Azumah Nelson
1996: Danny Romero
1997: Vince Phillips
1998: Kostya Tszyu
1999: Michael Carbajal
2000: Virgil Hill
2001: John Michael Johnson
2002: Arturo Gatti
2003: James Toney
2004: Marco Antonio Barrera
2005: Ike Quartey
2006: Oleg Maskaev
2007: Paul Malignaggi
2008: Vitali Klitschko
2009: Floyd Mayweather

EVENT Of The Year

1993: Fan Man at Holyfield-Bowe
1994: Revenge: The Rematches
1995: Tyson returns
1996: Riot at The Garden
1997: The bite
1998: Tyson's reinstatement
1999: The IBF indictments
2000: Mosley vs. De La Hoya
2001: Middleweight World Championship Series
2002: The Lewis-Tyson press conference brawl
2003: Roy Jones fights at heavyweight
2004: Lennox Lewis retirement
2005: *The Contender*
2006: Corrales-Castillo III weigh-in
2007: Mayweather-De La Hoya
2008: Retirement of Floyd Mayweather
2009: Margarito caught cheating

THE 31ST ANNUAL HIGHLY UNOFFICIAL OFFICIAL AWARDS

MARTINEZ AND LEWKOWICZ
A winning combination

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Trainer of the Year
Freddie Roach

Manager of the Year
Sampson Lewkowicz (Sergio Martinez)

Female Fighter of the Year
Holly Holm

Female Fight of the Year
Jeannine Garside W 10 Ina Menzer

Most Exciting Division
Junior Welterweight

Most Boring Division
Heavyweight

Division With Most Potential
Welterweight

Division With Least Potential
Strawweight

Count Dracula Bloodbath Crimson Band-Aid
Rafael Marquez KO 3 Israel Vazquez
Nonito Donaire KO 4 Wladimir Sidorenko
Sergio Martinez W 12 Kelly Pavlik
Abner Mares W 12 Vic Darchinyan

Billy Graham-Joey Giardello Highway Robbery Award
Beibut Shumenov W 12 Gabriel Campillo
Eric Morel W 12 Gerry Penalosa
Lenny Zappavigna W 12 Fernando Angulo
Devon Alexander W 12 Andreas Kotelnik

Duane Bobick Disappointment Award
Arthur Abraham, Celestino Caballero, Chris Arreola

Rocky Balboa Gutsiest Effort Award
Amir Khan (vs. Marcos Maidana)
Ricky Burns (vs. Roman Martinez)
Michael Katsidis (vs. Juan Manuel Marquez)

Joe Bugner Just-Glad-To-Be-Here Trophy
Joshua Clottey (vs. Manny Pacquiao)
Shannon Briggs (vs. Vitali Klitschko)
Joe Greene (vs. Vanes Martirosyan)
Allan Green (vs. Andre Ward)

Future Champion Trophy
Saul Alvarez

Red Light-Green Light Crossroads Fight Of The Year
Saul Alvarez KO 6 Carlos Baldomir

Archie Moore Ol'-Man-River Rocking Chair
Glen Johnson

Slapsie Maxie Rosenbloom Featherfists Award
Ricky Burns

Muhammad Ali Time-To-Retire Pension Check
Jeff Lacy, Jose Luis Castillo, Roy Jones, Owen Beck, Jerson Ravelo, Mauricio Pastrana, Martin Castillo, Cory Spinks, Antwun Echols

Tony Ayala Jr. Wasted Talent Trophy
Edwin Valero

Best Tiny Man In Elevator Shoes
Luis Lazarte

Thomas Dewey "Fading Down The Stretch" Award
Brian Viloria (vs. Carlos Tamara)

Should've-Stayed-Out-To-Pasture Wall Calendar
Bones Adams, Lamon Brewster, Eric Lucas, Johnny McClain

Eder Jofre Best-Fighter-You-Never-Saw Award
Roman Gonzalez

Henry Armstrong Windmill Imitation
Fernando Guerrero

The Comedy-On-TV Golden Giggles Award
"Bang! Bang! Bang!" (we don't need to explain further, do we?)

Tony Zale Bodypuncher Memorial
Mercito Gesta

Buster Mathis Miniature Empty Refridgerator
Chris Arreola

Muhammad Ali "How To Lose With Class" Trophy
Michael Katsidis

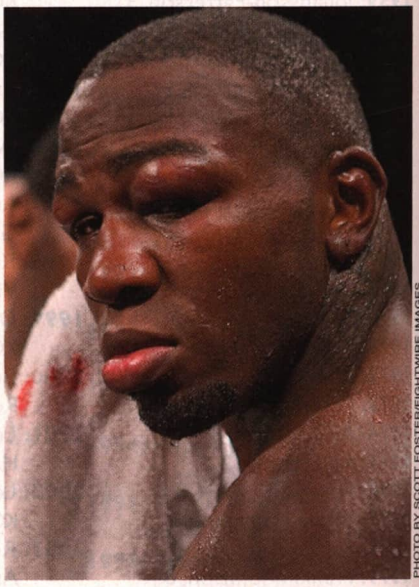


PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

LUMPY LACY
Time to hang 'em up, Jeff

Don't-Get-Up-To-Get-A-Beer Silver Mug

Alfredo Angulo KO 1 Joachim Alcine
Andre Berto KO 1 Freddy Hernandez
David Lemieux KO 1 Elvin Ayala
David Lemieux KO 1 Hector Camacho Jr.
Ji-Hoon Kim KO 1 Ameth Diaz
Chris Henry KO 1 Hugo Garay
Luis Concepcion KO 1 Denkaosaen Kaowichit
Jean-Paul Mendy W Disq. 1 Sakio Bika
Sergio Martinez KO 2 Paul Williams
Juan Manuel Lopez KO 2 Bernabe Concepcion

Howard Cosell "We Love Boxing" Trophy

Sports Illustrated's online editors, for paying so little mind to the sport that when writer Chris Mannix accidentally called Wladimir Klitschko "the best fighter of his generation" (Mannix later said he meant "best heavyweight"), none of the editors questioned it

Most Improved Fighter Award

Daniel Ponce De Leon

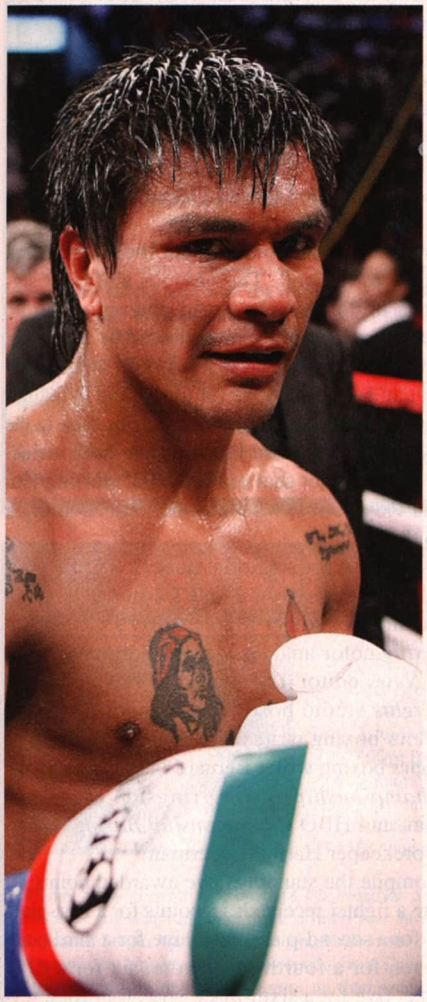


PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

DANIEL PONCE DE LEON
Keeps getting better

PHOTO BY TON PENNINGTON/GETTY IMAGES

PUNISHED
Margarito's face on the giant TV screen at Cowboys Stadium

Ken Norton Media Good Guy Award

Andre Ward

Spit-Or-Get-Off-The-Pot Award

Floyd Mayweather, David Rodriguez, Demetrius Andrade, Alexander Povetkin, Malik Scott

Jake LaMotta Cast-Iron-Chin Anvil

Rodrigo Guerrero (vs. Vic Darchinyan)
Shannon Briggs (vs. Vitali Klitschko)
John Duddy (vs. Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.)

Gene Tunney Distinguished Champion Award

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam

Tap Tap Makathini Name Of The Year

Big M Or Boonchuay

Azumah Nelson "Where'd He Come From?" Trophy

Dmitry Pirog (KO 5 Daniel Jacobs)
Garth Wood (KO 5 Anthony Mundine)
Ryol Li Lee (W 12 Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym)
Kaizer Mabuza (KO 6 Kendall Holt)

Steve Martin Arrow-Through-Head Ridiculous Gimmick

Antonio Margarito making light of a serious allegation by pretending to wrap a concrete brick atop his hand on HBO's *24/7*

Gerry Cooney Proper Pigmentation Award

Tyson Fury

Dave Tiberi Disappearing Fighter Award

Joshua Clottey, Verno Phillips

Facial Monstrosity Of The Year Golden Enswell

Antonio Margarito (vs. Manny Pacquiao)

Never-In-A-Bad-Fight Purple Heart

Michael Katsidis, Urbano Antillon, Rafael Marquez, Giovani Segura, Antonio Escalante, Alfredo Angulo, Marcos Maidana, Roman Martinez

TV Mismatches Of The Year

Demetrius Andrade KO 2 Bernardo Guereca (ESPN2)
Fernando Montiel KO 1 Ciso Morales (PPV)
Vitali Klitschko KO 10 Albert Sosnowski (PPV)
Tomasz Adamek KO 5 Vinny Maddalone (PPV)
Andre Berto KO 1 Freddy Hernandez (HBO)

Rip-Off-The-Public Non-Effort Of The Year

Paul Briggs (vs. Danny Green)
Audley Harrison (vs. David Haye)
Joan Guzman (prior to every fight)

Mando Muniz "If At First You Don't Succeed" Persistence Award

Luis Lazarte, Orlando Salido, Jason Litzau

Yogi Berra "It's Not Over Till It's Over" Resiliency Award

Roman Karmazin (KO 10 Dionisio Miranda)
John Molina (KO 11 Henry Lundy)
Ken Hershman (running the "Super Six")

Emile Griffith "Steady If Unspectacular" Trophy

Erislandy Lara, Ishe Smith, Lovemore Ndou, Zsolt Erdei

The RING BEST FIGHTER POLL

A Survey Of The Experts

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

WATCH OUT
Manny Pacquiao hones in on the cowering Joshua Clottey

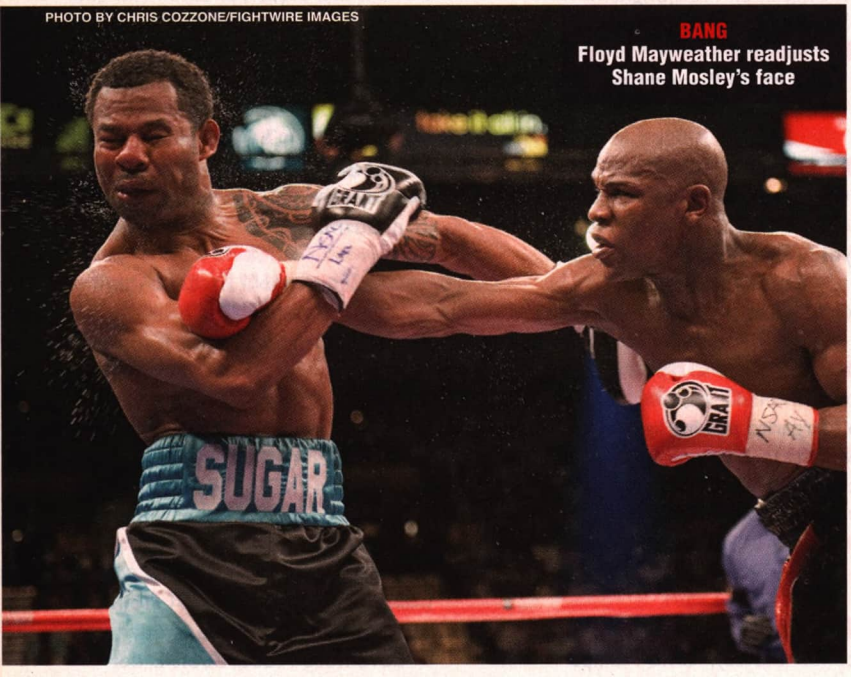


PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

BANG
Floyd Mayweather readjusts Shane Mosley's face

From the outsider's mainstream perspective, the only two names you hear bandied about when it comes to boxing are Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather. They now seem like companion pieces, where you can't hear one's name without mentioning the other.

It appears the experts feel the same way—to a point. There is one of the two that is starting to put some distance between him and the other when it comes to who is considered the best fighter in the world—and for the third-straight year, that fighter is "Pac-Man," according to the 30th annual RING "Experts Poll."

Pacquiao continues to reach new destinations, and this year's poll proved more of the same. After beating reluctant Joshua Clottey and smashing overmatched Antonio Margarito in 2010, Pac-Man now joins an exclusive club of three-time consecutive winners that includes legendary Julio Cesar Chavez (1990-92), Mayweather (2005-07), and the only consecutive four-time winner, Marvelous Marvin Hagler (1983-86).

Pacquiao's unanimous choice also puts him in an elite class where only Hagler, Mayweather, Roy Jones, and Bernard Hopkins reside as unanimous selections. But the future Hall of Famer from the Philippines has something no other fighter has ever achieved during the 30 years of the poll—that's becoming a two-time unanimous choice.

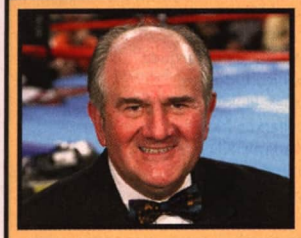
While Pacquiao received all 10 first-place votes, Mayweather received nine of 10 second-place selections, with "Pretty Boy's" non-activity being the biggest reason why he's slipped in the opinion of the experts. When Mayweather was active, Pacquiao had finished behind "Money" two-straight years (in '06 and '07).

This year also introduced another rarity, five newcomers to the poll. The obvious and most significant is middleweight world champion Sergio Martinez, who debuts at four, followed by four other first-timers, Andre Ward (at five), Tim Bradley (at seven), Juan Manuel Lopez (at nine), and Wladimir Klitschko (at 10). It also marks the 10th time in the last 12 years that Bernard Hopkins has been included. The only fighter that exceeds that sterling longevity is Roy Jones, who was named 12-straight years to the poll.

This year's prestigious panel: Showtime's *ShoBox* ringside analyst Steve Farhood, bantamweight contender Abner Mares, HBO's *Championship Boxing* color analyst Max Kellerman, British *Boxing News* editor Tris Dixon, ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* studio host Brian Kenny, New York *Daily News* boxing writer Tim Smith, Philadelphia *Daily News* boxing writer Bernard Fernandez, Showtime *Championship Boxing* ringside analyst Al Bernstein, and HBO *Championship Boxing*'s unofficial scorekeeper Harold Lederman.

To compile the standings, we awarded points for each vote a fighter received: 15 points for a first-place vote, 12 for a second-place vote, nine for a third-place vote, seven for a fourth-place vote, six for a fifth-place vote, five for a sixth-place vote, four for a seventh-place vote, three for an eighth-place vote, two for a ninth-place vote, and one for a 10th-place vote.

HAROLD LEDERMAN



1. Manny Pacquiao
2. Floyd Mayweather
3. Andre Ward
4. Juan Manuel Marquez
5. Timothy Bradley
6. Fernando Montiel
7. Juan Manuel Lopez
8. Wladimir Klitschko
9. Sergio Martinez
10. Giovani Segura

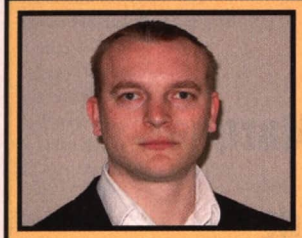
"Manny Pacquiao is at the top of his game, and he cemented his number-one rating with a huge win over Antonio Margarito. Floyd Mayweather, still looking sensational against lightweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez, moves down to number two, but the truth is, who could beat Money Mayweather if he decides to become active again? Andre Ward looked sensational in and out of the "Super Six," jumps all the way up to number three by defeating solid veterans Sakio Bika and Mikkel Kessler. Sergio Martinez' sensational kayo over iron-chinned Paul Williams and his total dominance at middleweight make him the ideal candidate to move into my top 10."

TIM SMITH

1. Manny Pacquiao
2. Floyd Mayweather
3. Juan Manuel Marquez
4. Tim Bradley
5. Andre Ward
6. Sergio Martinez
7. Juan Manuel Lopez
8. Nonito Donaire
9. Paul Williams
10. Wladimir Klitschko

"I think Manny Pacquiao has caught everyone's attention. I certainly think he's a good fighter, not the greatest of all-time, but he's entertaining. For the last couple of years, he's carried the sport on his shoulders. From that perspective, I think he's the number-one fighter in the sport. Mayweather isn't active enough to be number one and he has to understand that there are certain responsibilities with being the best. That means getting in the ring. He has to show fans his craft. Marquez is the third-best fighter in the world, and, if not for Manny and Floyd, he would be number one."

TRIS DIXON



1. Manny Pacquaio
2. Floyd Mayweather
3. Juan-Manuel Marquez
4. Sergio Martinez
5. Nonito Donaire
6. Bernard Hopkins
7. Wladimir Klitschko
8. Andre Ward
9. Fernando Montiel
10. Juan Manuel Lopez

"Manny gets the top slot based on the level of opposition and that he seems to be the one chasing Mayweather, rather than the other way around. Marquez solidified his spot with the war against Katsidis, but I wonder if he will figure on this list next year. Time is not on his side. Martinez' mammoth knockout of Williams shifts him above the skillful Donaire, who has been boxing fighters with far less skill than him. He can legitimize his place by beating Montiel in February or improve his ranking by looking good doing it. Wladimir has been the more dominant brother this year. Ward's victories over Kessler, Green, and Bika have all been lopsided, while not many had a better 2010 than Montiel. JuanMa is my wildcard, ahead of Vitali, Pascal, Bradley, and Wonjongkam."

STEVE FARHOOD

1. Manny Pacquiao
2. Floyd Mayweather
3. Juan Manuel Marquez
4. Sergio Martinez
5. Nonito Donaire
6. Pongsaklek Wonjongkam
7. Bernard Hopkins
8. Toshiaki Nishioka
9. Andre Ward
10. Juan Manuel Lopez

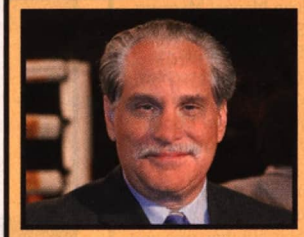
"The question is no longer whether Pac-Man is number one. Rather, it's where he ranks in history. At this point, a win over Mayweather would mean even more for boxing than it would for Pacquiao, but, if that fight never happens, Manny has established himself as an all-time great. And given the watered-down alphabet era we live in, that's quite impressive. As for the others, Marquez is at least the equal of countrymen Marco Antonio Barrera and Erik Morales, but I'm guessing a lot of people fail to see it that way. That's because Barrera and Morales repeatedly faced each other in their primes, and counterpunhing master Marquez wasn't particularly exciting until reinventing himself. The best thing about Ward and Lopez is that they're fighting in hot divisions, and the opportunity to move up will present itself. The same cannot be said for Martinez because the middleweights are flat."

MAX KELLERMAN

1. Manny Pacquiao
2. Floyd Mayweather
3. Sergio Martinez
4. Nonito Donaire
5. Andre Ward
6. Tim Bradley
7. Juan Manuel Marquez
8. Bernard Hopkins
9. Vitali Klitschko
10. Wladimir Klitschko

"Manny is my number one because Mayweather doesn't fight enough, while the other guy is fighting two, three times a year. At three, there's no question. Look who Sergio Martinez has fought. Aside from the strength of his resume, when you see him, you know how special he is. Donaire has moved up through attrition, and I always had him higher up than everyone else. Ward is the best American fighter who is active, and I believe that if the Klitschkos were to fight, I have to give the edge to the older brother. The older brother always wins."

AL BERNSTEIN



1. Manny Pacquiao
2. Floyd Mayweather
3. Sergio Martinez
4. Nonito Donaire
5. Juan Manuel Marquez
6. Fernando Montiel
7. Andre Ward
8. Lucian Bute
9. Juan Manuel Lopez
10. Tim Bradley

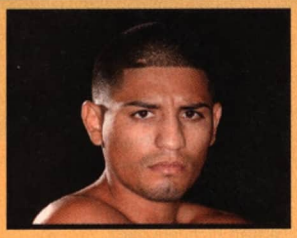
"I retain Pacquiao on top because he's active and he keeps winning. To me, one of the most remarkable stories of boxing is how Pacquiao has reinvented himself two-thirds of the way into his career. Looking down the group, the fighter with the absolute biggest upside has to be, I think, Nonito Donaire. If he remains healthy and doesn't squander his talent in any way, he'll be one of the great fighters of this generation. The other one I'd put in there is Andre Ward, who had a great 2010 beating veterans and showing what he can do in the "Super Six."

BERNARD FERNANDEZ

1. Manny Pacquiao
2. Floyd Mayweather
3. Sergio Martinez
4. Bernard Hopkins
5. Juan Manuel Marquez
6. Andre Ward
7. Wladimir Klitschko
8. Tim Bradley
9. Miguel Cotto
10. Juan Manual Lopez

"I've been picking Floyd number one these last few years, but fighters fight. They don't go on extended hiatuses. It's why I like Pacquiao at one. Until Floyd makes the Pacquiao fight happen, I can't put Floyd number one. The bottom line is that Mayweather doesn't seem like he wants to fight anymore. That's why you have to love what Pacquiao has done. I can't drop Hopkins any lower either because I thought Bernard beat Jean Pascal. I really think if that fight took place anywhere but Quebec City, Hopkins would have gotten the decision."

ABNER MARES



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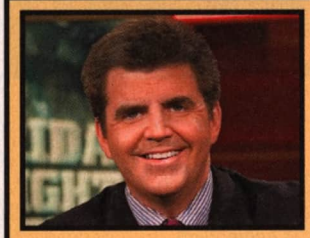
5. Juan Manuel Lopez
6. Nonito Donaire
7. Andre Ward
8. Tim Bradley
9. Fernando Montiel
10. Wladimir Klitschko

"Manny Pacquiao has done phenomenal work, and Juan Manuel Marquez proves that he deserves to be second. I respect Floyd and what he's done. It's just that Floyd has not been fighting, while Marquez has. He's not just fighting, but fighting quality opponents. I wasn't surprised when Marquez got knocked down by Michael Katsidids, but by the way he fought back. I can see myself on this list one of these days. I just have to work harder and keep going on this pace that I am right now."

BRIAN KENNY



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9. Juan Manuel Lopez
10. Nonito Donaire

"I had Mayweather number one after his win over Marquez, but the pound-for-pound king has abdicated. You can't be number one if you're bigger than the guy at number two and you're 'on vacation,' while he's crushing everyone in the division. Pacquiao is the most exciting and most accomplished fighter in the sport today. Sergio Martinez is the ceiling for Pacquiao's rise. I may have Ward higher than most, but he has handled a variety of styles in the super middleweight tourney and looks like a longtime champion. As the Klitschkos go, dominance should be rewarded, but we really don't know which one is better."

THE RING

The Ring

1. Manny Pacquiao
2. Floyd Mayweather
3. Sergio Martinez
4. Juan Manuel Marquez
5. Nonito Donaire
6. Pongsaklek Wonjongkam
7. Fernando Montiel
8. Wladimir Klitschko
9. Timothy Bradley
10. Juan Manuel Lopez

"It's quite simple: Pacquiao is fighting—and fighting much larger opponents, while Mayweather seems content to fight once a year. There are consequences to that attitude, and it comes with how a once-a-year superstar is perceived by his fanbase and the media. And after Sergio Mora's draw against Shane Mosley, it's put some tarnish on the one victory Mayweather had in 2010. Pacquiao has carved his own niche as the centerpiece of boxing, while young guns like Nonito Donaire, Tim Bradley, and Juan Manuel Lopez prove there is rising young talent in the sport."

THE RESULTS

1. **Manny Pacquiao** — 150 points
2. **Mayweather** — 117 points
3. **Juan Manual Marquez** — 76 points
4. **Sergio Martinez** — 68 points
5. **Andre Ward** — 48 points
6. **Nonito Donaire** — 41 points
7. **Tim Bradley** — 27 points
8. **Bernard Hopkins** — 24 points
9. **Juan Manuel Lopez** — 21 points
10. **Wladimir Klitschko** — 20 points

ALSO RECEIVING VOTES

Fernando Montiel—18
Pongsaklek Wonjongkam—10
Vitali Klitschko—5
Toshiaki Nishioka—3
Lucian Bute—3
Paul Williams—2
Giovani Segura—1

2009 POLL
1. Manny Pacquiao—144 pts.
2. Floyd Mayweather—126
3. Shane Mosley—79
4. Bernard Hopkins—61
5. Chad Dawson—48
6. Paul Williams—42
7. Juan Manuel Marquez—40
8. Nonito Donaire—22
9. Ivan Calderon—15
10. Arthur Abraham—14

2008 POLL
1. Manny Pacquiao—150
2. Joe Calzaghe—100
3. Juan Manuel Marquez—93
4. Bernard Hopkins—73
5. Antonio Margarito—52
6. Israel Vazquez—50
7. Rafael Marquez—31
8. Miguel Cotto—27
9. Ricky Hatton—18 (tie)
9. Paul Williams—18 (tie)

2007 POLL
1. Floyd Mayweather—150
2. Manny Pacquiao—103
3. Joe Calzaghe—83
4. Bernard Hopkins—63
5. Juan Manuel Marquez—58
6. Miguel Cotto—51
7. Israel Vazquez—30
8. Kelly Pavlik—21
9. Winky Wright—15
10. Juan Diaz—13 (tie)
10. Oscar De La Hoya—13 (tie)

2006 POLL
1. Floyd Mayweather—141
2. Manny Pacquiao—129
3. Winky Wright—84
4. Jermain Taylor—61
5. Joe Calzaghe—49
6. Marco Antonio Barrera—32
7. Rafael Marquez—28
8. Ricky Hatton—23
9. Shane Mosley—20
10. Jose Luis Castillo—19

2005 POLL
1. Floyd Mayweather—144
2. Winky Wright—113
3. Marco Antonio Barrera—70
4. Juan Manuel Marquez—43
5. Rafael Marquez—39
6. Ricky Hatton—38
7. Jose Luis Castillo—36
8. Jermain Taylor—34
9. Zab Judah—31
10. Antonio Tarver—30

2004 POLL
1. Bernard Hopkins—150
2. Floyd Mayweather—111
3. Kostya Tszyu—88
4. Winky Wright—70
5. Marco Antonio Barrera—52
6. Manny Pacquiao—38
7. Erik Morales—26
8. Juan Manuel Marquez—25
9. Felix Trinidad—22
10. Diego Corrales—11 (tie)
10. Rafael Marquez—11 (tie)

2003 POLL
1. Roy Jones—142
2. Bernard Hopkins—114
3. Floyd Mayweather—97
4. Shane Mosley—53
5. Kostya Tszyu—48
6. Oscar De La Hoya—45
7. Manny Pacquiao—38
8. James Toney—35
9. Erik Morales—31
10. Lennox Lewis—22

2002 POLL
1. Roy Jones—135
2. Oscar De La Hoya—89
3. Marco Antonio Barrera—78 (tie)
3. Vernon Forrest—78 (tie)
3. Bernard Hopkins—78 (tie)
6. Floyd Mayweather—45
7. Lennox Lewis—43
8. Kostya Tszyu—42
9. Erik Morales—25
10. Shane Mosley—13

2001 POLL
1. Shane Mosley—132
2. Roy Jones—108
3. Bernard Hopkins—98
4. Floyd Mayweather—77
5. Marco Antonio Barrera—44
6. Oscar De La Hoya—40
7. Felix Trinidad—39
8. Kostya Tszyu—34
9. Lennox Lewis—23
10. Ricardo Lopez—22

2000 POLL
1. Felix Trinidad—126
2. Shane Mosley—123
3. Roy Jones—109
4. Oscar De La Hoya—43
5. Floyd Mayweather—39
6. Naseem Hamed—37
7. Ricardo Lopez—35
8. Diego Corrales—33
9. Bernard Hopkins—32
10. Lennox Lewis—31

1999 POLL
1. Roy Jones—150
2. Oscar De La Hoya—85
3. Floyd Mayweather—78
4. Shane Mosley—68 (tie)
4. Felix Trinidad—68 (tie)
6. Mark Johnson—47 (tie)
6. Ricardo Lopez—47 (tie)
8. Erik Morales—21
9. Bernard Hopkins—16
10. Fernando Vargas—15

1998 POLL
1. Roy Jones—141
2. Oscar De La Hoya—123
3. Felix Trinidad—67
4. Shane Mosley—65
5. Evander Holyfield—55
6. Mark Johnson—45
7. Naseem Hamed—33
8. Ricardo Lopez—23
9. Floyd Mayweather—19
10. Pernell Whitaker—14

1997 POLL
1. Oscar De La Hoya—123
2. Roy Jones—117
3. Ricardo Lopez—83
4. Evander Holyfield—80
5. Felix Trinidad—65
6. Pernell Whitaker—37
7. Naseem Hamed—28
8. Mark Johnson—22 (tie)
8. Junior Jones—22 (tie)
10. Johnny Tapia—18

1996 POLL
1. Roy Jones—123
2. Oscar De La Hoya—107
3. Pernell Whitaker—92
4. Evander Holyfield—64
5. Felix Trinidad—59
6. Ricardo Lopez—56
7. Terry Norris—28
8. Ike Quartey—21
9. Azumah Nelson—12
10. Yuri Arbachakov—11

1995 POLL
1. Roy Jones—138
2. Pernell Whitaker—126
3. Oscar De La Hoya—74
4. Felix Trinidad—59
5. Marco Antonio Barrera—48
6. Riddick Bowe—44
7. Ricardo Lopez—37
8. Julio Cesar Chavez—18
9. Ike Quartey—16
10. Naseem Hamed—12

1994 POLL
1. Pernell Whitaker—130
2. Roy Jones—129
3. Frankie Randall—53
4. Ricardo Lopez—45
5. Orlando Canizales—39
6. Chiquita Gonzalez—38
7. James Toney—36
8. Gerald McClellan—33
9. Felix Trinidad—29
10. Kevin Kelley—28

1993 POLL
1. Pernell Whitaker—147
2. Julio Cesar Chavez—86
3. Terry Norris—84
4. James Toney—76
5. Michael Carbajal—39
6. Evander Holyfield—36
7. Buddy McGirt—28
8. Roy Jones—23
9. Orlando Canizales—22
10. Ricardo Lopez—21

1992 POLL
1. Julio Cesar Chavez—136
2. Terry Norris—91
3. Pernell Whitaker—85
4. Buddy McGirt—60
5. Riddick Bowe—45
6. Orlando Canizales—36
7. Azumah Nelson—34
8. Lennox Lewis—24
9. Julian Jackson—18
10. Roy Jones—15 (tie)
10. Mike McCallum—15 (tie)

1991 POLL
1. Julio Cesar Chavez—138
2. Pernell Whitaker—100
3. Evander Holyfield—78
4. Mike Tyson—55
5. Meldrick Taylor—48
6. Mike McCallum—38
7. Thomas Hearns—34
8. Khaosai Galaxy—25
9. Terry Norris—22
10. Simon Brown—21

1990 POLL
1. Julio Cesar Chavez—123
2. Pernell Whitaker—104
3. Mike Tyson—71
4. Meldrick Taylor—57
5. Buster Douglas—51
6. Simon Brown—27
7. Antonio Esparragoza—25
8. Michael Nunn—23
9. Evander Holyfield—21
10. Humberto Gonzalez—14

1989 POLL
1. Mike Tyson—147
2. Julio Cesar Chavez—91
3. Meldrick Taylor—61
4. Michael Nunn—60
5. Evander Holyfield—56
6. Pernell Whitaker—46
7. Ray Leonard—28
8. Jeff Fenech—27
9. Azumah Nelson—18
10. Marlon Starling—16

1988 POLL
1. Mike Tyson—144
2. Julio Cesar Chavez—118
3. Evander Holyfield—66
4. Ray Leonard—55
5. Jeff Fenech—44
6. Michael Nunn—33
7. Azumah Nelson—32
8. Jung Koo Chang—23
9. Buddy McGirt—21
10. Sumbu Kalambay—18

NO POLL IN 1987

1986 POLL
1. Marvin Hagler—138
2. Mike Tyson—92
3. Donald Curry—59
4. Thomas Hearns—52
5. Edwin Rosario—47
6. Azumah Nelson—45 (tie)
6. Michael Spinks—45 (tie)
8. Evander Holyfield—32
9. Julio Cesar Chavez—26
10. Hector Camacho—22

1985 POLL
1. Marvin Hagler—150
2. Hector Camacho—86
3. Michael Spinks—85
4. Donald Curry—78
5. Thomas Hearns—42
6. Barry McGuigan—32
7. Milton McCrory—25
8. Julio Cesar Chavez—22 (tie)
8. Pinklon Thomas—22 (tie)
10. Larry Holmes—21

1984 POLL
1. Marvin Hagler—112
2. Aaron Pryor—77
3. Larry Holmes—72
4. Eusebio Pedroza—66
5. Hector Camacho—50
6. Jeff Chandler—47 (tie)
6. Ray Leonard—47 (tie)
8. Michael Spinks—45
9. Thomas Hearns—34
10. Donald Curry—26

1983 POLL
1. Marvin Hagler—147
2. Aaron Pryor—93
3. Larry Holmes—91
4. Michael Spinks—66
5. Jeff Chandler—57
6. Thomas Hearns—45
7. Alexis Arguello—29
8. Wilfredo Gomez—28
9. Hector Camacho—24
10. Eusebio Pedroza—12

1982 POLL
1. Ray Leonard—142
2. Alexis Arguello—97
3. Marvin Hagler—76
4. Salvador Sanchez—72
5. Wilfred Benitez—68
6. Larry Holmes—61
7. Jeff Chandler—25
8. Eusebio Pedroza—18
9. Aaron Pryor—17
10. Thomas Hearns—14 (tie)
10. Dwight Muhammad Qawi—14 (tie)

1981 POLL
1. Thomas Hearns—116
2. Ray Leonard—108
3. Marvin Hagler—76
4. Larry Holmes—75
5. Alexis Arguello—62
6. Wilfredo Gomez—58
7. Eddie Mustafa Muhammad—28
8. Matthew Saad Muhammad—24
9. Wilfred Benitez—18
10. Roberto Duran—13 (tie)
10. Aaron Pryor—13 (tie)

1980 POLL
1. Roberto Duran—96
2. Ray Leonard—93
3. Wilfredo Gomez—88
4. Danny Lopez—65
5. Pipino Cuevas—54
6. Alexis Arguello—40
7. Larry Holmes—32
8. Wilfred Benitez—26
9. Vito Antuofermo—25 (tie)
9. Matthew Saad Muhammad—25 (tie)

DOWN BUT NOT OUT
When Khan floored Maidana with a right-left to the body in the first round, it seemed that he was in for a quick night, but Maidana got up and gave the Englishman the toughest fight of his career.

PHOTO BY SCOTT HEAVEY/GETTY IMAGES

PROFILE IN COURAGE

Khan Overcomes Adversity To Beat Maidana

By Norm Frauenheim

There is no stardom without peril. Maybe that's why Amir Khan almost seemed to welcome it. For weeks, Khan sounded as if he wanted to walk the high wire, precariously balanced on that unforgiving edge of a crisis. Fall and it's a quick trip into a dark corner crowded with broken clichés, unfulfilled promise, and few chances at a comeback ticket. Stand and the potential increases by breathtaking multiples.

Khan stood, withstood, the moment delivered by Marcos Maidana, 139, with a concussive impact that could have sent a lesser fighter's career tumbling into demise. On the career clock, a right hand from Maidana at 1:05 of the 10th round and 28:05 after the opening bell on the night of December 11 struck with powerful punctuation that looms as a reference point.

There is still much to learn about Khan. No single moment defines. There will be many. Connect the dots. Timothy Bradley might be the next one, or maybe Devon Alexander.

A hint at who Khan might be, however, was there in the immediate aftermath of a Maidana punch that left him looking dazed and desperate before winning a narrow decision in front of the Mandalay Bay crowd filled with only doubt about his future throughout one furious round.

For nearly 75 seconds, Khan somehow stayed on his feet while not throwing a single counter to a furious barrage from Maidana, whose punches came from countless angles as dangerous as they were wild. Depending on who was counting, there was a volley of 25 to 27 unanswered punches from Maidana.

Only with about 20 seconds left in the round, did Khan respond with a left-right combination. Actually, it was more than just a mere response. It was a declaration of survival, a gritty gesture that said a stubborn, if not brave, heart was what Khan wanted to display to ambivalent fans skeptical about his durability.

"I'm a different fighter," Khan proclaimed before he went to a Las Vegas hospital for a series CAT scans.

The biggest difference is in perception. There is nothing quite like a fighter holding on and eventually fighting back. There was no knockdown in the 10th. Yet, judges Jerry Roth, C.J. Ross, and Glenn Trowbridge scored as if there had been. It was 10-8 for Maidana on each card. But Khan survived the ordeal and fought back, which can win fans over, perhaps even more than knockout power.

"People wondered when the going got tough, did he have the will to win?" said

Richard Schaefer, the chief executive officer for Golden Boy and Khan's promoter "He showed he's a true champion and he picked up a few million fans."

For Khan's ardent fans who have been following him since he was a 17-year-old Olympic silver medalist for Britain at the 2004 Athens Games, the display of stubborn courage against Maidana for the WBA's 140-pound title was as inevitable as his heritage. Khan is the British-born son of Shajaad Khan, a Pakistani immigrant. In the Khan family's ancestry, there are warriors. The boxer comes from a clan, Janjua Raput, which is rich in historical lore about warrior kings and fierce battles.

"It's in the blood and the body," Khan said in a chat room before the Maidana bout. "It shows that we're fighters and have heart. We can go into a fight and not be afraid of anybody."

After Maidana, fear is no question. The 24-year-old Khan is absolutely fearless.

"If Amir Khan can get through that the way he did, I tip my hat to him," said Maidana trainer Miguel Diaz, who admired Khan despite his anger at Joe Cortez for refereeing in a manner Diaz said put Maidana at a critical disadvantage on the scorecards. Khan, 140, was a three-point winner on two cards—Roth and Ross. He won by a single point on Trowbridge's card.

But admiration, more than points, promises to be the key victory in the Golden Boy blueprint for turning Khan into a bankable star, especially in Britain. Golden Boy President Oscar De La Hoya had often expressed a desire to fight Ricky Hatton at Wembley Stadium in London. It never happened. Manny Pacquiao, who sparred with Khan before his victory over Antonio Margarito, got in the way when he stopped De La Hoya in 2008. But Khan might be able to fulfill that ambition for De La Hoya, the promoter.

There still are doubts about whether Khan can ever capture the working-class fan base that followed Hatton like boxing's version of The Beatles. Khan doesn't have the blue-collar, white man's roots. Hatton was always the approachable bloke at the corner pub. You could have a beer with him.

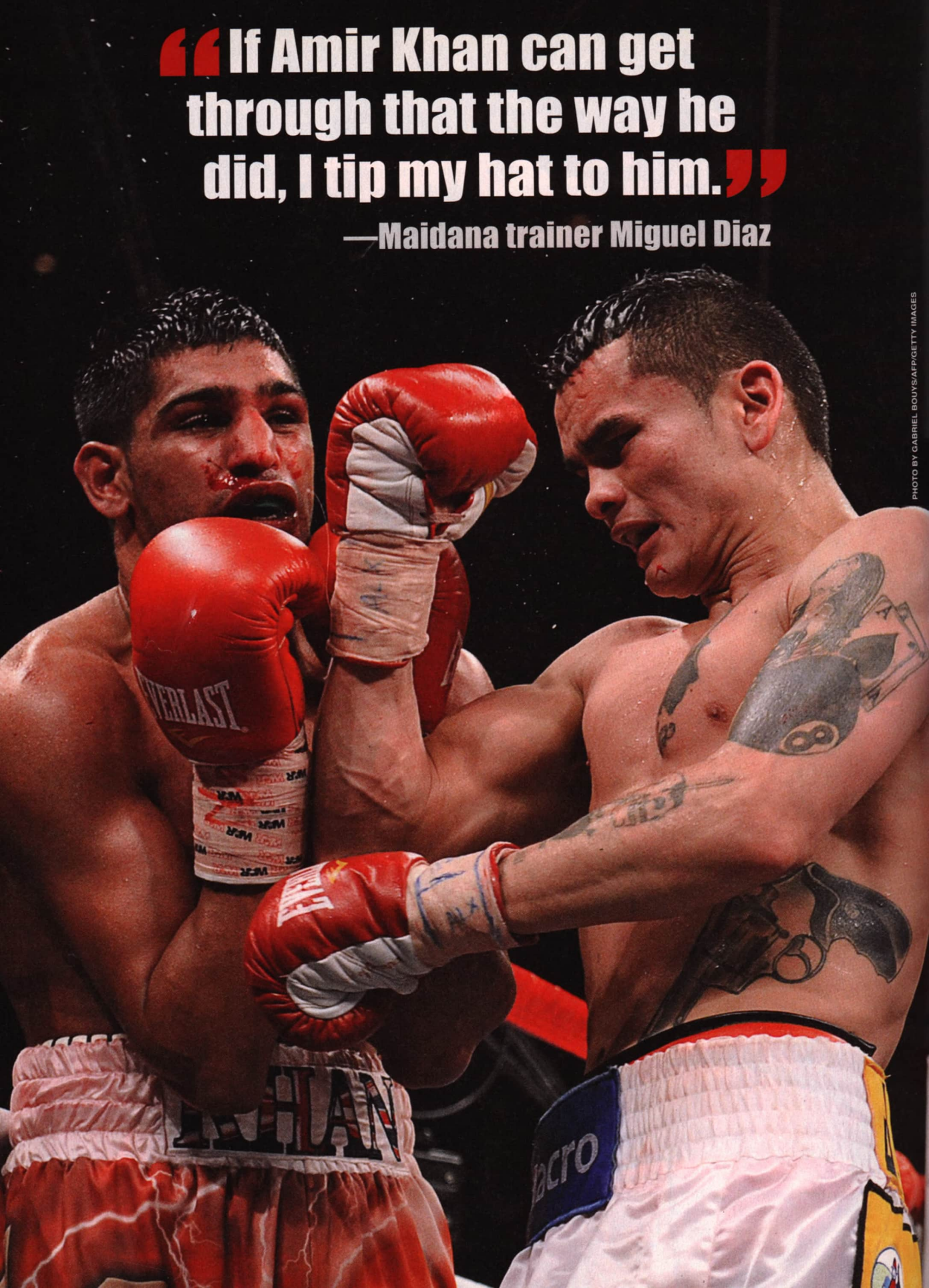
Khan is not that kind of a personality. He has a middle-class upbringing and Pakistani roots. He also is a practicing Muslim. So was Muhammad Ali, by the way, but there was no war against

PHOTO BY SCOTT HEAVEY/GETTY IMAGES

OUCH!
Khan added to his early lead with punches such as this heavy left hand that distorted his adversary's face.

PHOTO BY SCOTT HEAVEY/GETTY IMAGES

KHAN'S CRISIS
Maidana almost stopped Khan in the 10th round when he hurt him badly with a power-laden right to the jaw.


“If Amir Khan can get through that the way he did, I tip my hat to him.”
—Maidana trainer Miguel Diaz
EVERLAST
KHAN
PHOTO BY GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

terrorism during Ali's career. For Khan, that is a potential hurdle to the widespread acceptance enjoyed by other fighters in the US and Britain.

Khan told the media last year that if he were white "maybe I'd have been a superstar in Britain." He says he has changed his mind, or perhaps he has just decided to convince skeptics in the only way he can. He fights fearlessly, which brings us back to his victory over Maidana and onto a potential date against Victor Ortiz, Zab Juah, or Joan Guzman before a likely showdown with the Bradley-Alexander winner.

Schaefer wants Khan's next fight in the UK. Judah, aware of Khan's growing marketability, tried to talk his way into a good payday almost within hours after the Brit's victory by unanimous decision was announced. Judah campaigned on his Twitter account. "Khan fight nearly done," he tweeted.

If Khan wins on the home front, Schaefer wants the Bradley-Alexander winner in July, possibly at Staples Center in Los Angeles on a card he said could include Maidana against the Bradley-Alexander loser. Despite the loss to Khan, Schaefer said Golden Boy still has a long-term deal with Maidana, the biggest puncher at 140 pounds and perhaps a few divisions north of junior-welterweight.

For now, the consensus is that Khan prevails in his next date in a British homecoming and that Bradley beats Alexander. Bradley looms as the favorite against Khan. Unlike the power-reliant Maidana, Bradley can do more. His versatility against Khan's fast hands and agile footwork makes for an intriguing match of styles, smarts, and adjustments.

Despite Khan's mighty stand against Maidana, questions about his chin linger. Khan and Schaefer said his ability to endure Maidana's frightening power answered, once and for all, questions about the fragility of his chin. Those doubts had been raised mostly by Breidis Prescott's two-knockdown, 54-second kayo of Khan two years ago.

"He went from having the most questionable chin to having the best chin," Schaefer said.

Maybe.

What is certain, however, is that future opponents, whether Judah or Ortiz, will plan to test that chin all over again. In part, they will because of how the Maidana fight played out. The Maidana corner angrily accused Cortez of favoring Khan to the point that

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

OFFICIOUS OFFICIAL
Maidana and his camp criticized referee Joe Cortez for breaking the fighters when each had one hand free. Maidana said it felt like he was fighting two men—Khan and Cortez.

PHOTO BY SCOTT HEAVEY/GETTY IMAGES

POINT PROVEN
Trainer Roach was very pleased with the way Khan came back from the almost fatal 10th round to win a close but unanimous 12-round decision. Those who doubted Khan's heart and durability were proven wrong.

COMPUBOX STATS

AMIR KHAN		MARCOS MAIDANA
603	Total Punches Thrown	767
273	Total Connects	156
45	Connect Percentage	20
243	Jabs Thrown	271
83	Jab Connects	34
360	Total Power Punches Thrown	496
190	Total Power Connects	122

Maidana was somehow prevented from throwing the knockout blow.

Maidana, 29-2 (27), said he was one punch away from ending it. He also said he sometimes felt as if he were in a fight against two, Khan and Cortez, whose difficult job as the third man in the ring was reflected by blood stains from both fighters on the back of his blue shirt.

"At one point, I even thought he was going to punch me," Maidana said of Cortez.

But Diaz also suggested that Maidana's wild attack was too haphazard. There was power and plenty of shots, but the target was repeatedly missed when one precise blow could have ended it.

"My boy was too disorganized with his punches," Diaz said.

Bradley won't be.

The best, perhaps only, way to eliminate doubts about Khan's chin might be in a rematch with Prescott. It's no coincidence that Prescott and his co-promoters, Lou DiBella and Leon Margules, needed only a few days to begin campaigning for a rematch. The best way to find a definitive answer is to go back to the source.

But an immediate rematch with Prescott looks unlikely. It might be something about styles making fights and unmaking stardom. But there's also the brutal nature of the Maidana fight itself. Remember, Khan went to the hospital for a CAT scan after winning. Golden Boy wanted to make sure there was no damage from all those concussive blows. Khan, 24-1 (17), was reported to be fine. But like that old equation about styles and fights, there is another one about the physical toll inevitable in a tough fight. Even the winner eventually pays.

Khan trainer Freddie Roach loved the courage he witnessed through 12 rounds.

"Man, he showed some [bleeping] balls," said Roach, who thought about throwing in the towel after the 10th but decided against it after asking questions and getting all the right answers from Khan before the 11th. "A lot of people said he would get hit on the chin and quit. He showed he's got no quit, none at all, in him."

But Roach also was quick to say that he wasn't anxious for an encore.

"No, I don't think I want to see another 10th round like that," said Roach, whose Parkinson's is a constant reminder of what can happen when a fighter absorbs too much punishment.

Nobody, perhaps, was more surprised by what he saw in Khan's stand-fight-and-endure set of tactics than Bradley, whom Khan picks to beat Alexander. At a news conference with Alexander during the week before the opening bell on December 11, Bradley said Khan would be "crazy" if he allowed himself to stand and punch with Maidana, the son of an Argentine gaucho. Bradley also picked Maidana.

Meanwhile, Alexander picked Khan. But he also warned Khan not to get "stupid and bang with him."

But Khan did and—for now—he looks brilliant. A reason rests in a significant change from the loss to Prescott, said Khan, who also came back from a sixth-round knockdown for a victory over Willie Limond in 2007.

Khan was a lightweight against Prescott. He had to lose about 15 pounds to make 135. That, he said, takes a toll. As junior welterweight, he said, the task of having to shed fewer pounds means more staying power.

"I used to always make the weight," said Khan, who also went through some rigorous work at strengthening his legs under the guidance of conditioning coach Alex Ariza. "Regardless, it was so hard. I used to kill myself, going into fights weak. It affects you. You can get hurt."

But sometimes, getting hurt is the only way to learn how to deal with peril and perhaps stardom. ■

Norm Frauenheim covered boxing for **The Arizona Republic** *for two decades and was the winner of the 2008 Fleischer Award.*

PHOTO BY SCOTT HEAVEY/GETTY IMAGES

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NOW THERE ARE TWO

Mares And Agbeko Advance To The Finals

By David Mayo

Yonnhy Perez hummed one 95-mph fastball after another down the middle of the plate. But once Joseph Agbeko had it timed, it could have been 125, and it wouldn't have mattered, because the one thing Perez lacked was something off-speed to make his attack overpowering.

Perez was the power forward who can't defend outside the paint, while Agbeko was the center that can score either facing the basket or with his back to it. Perez was the running back with the inborn ability to run to daylight, but no ability to cut or change pace, while Agbeko mixed his speed with a stutter-step and a real ability to make an opponent miss.

That all of this came as a great surprise—that Perez' withering assault did not carry the day, and particularly that Agbeko's cunning did—was the big answer to those who pooh-poohed or trivialized Showtime's four-man bantamweight tournament because of what it lacked, from the biggest names at 118 pounds, to losing its originally planned venue over security issues.

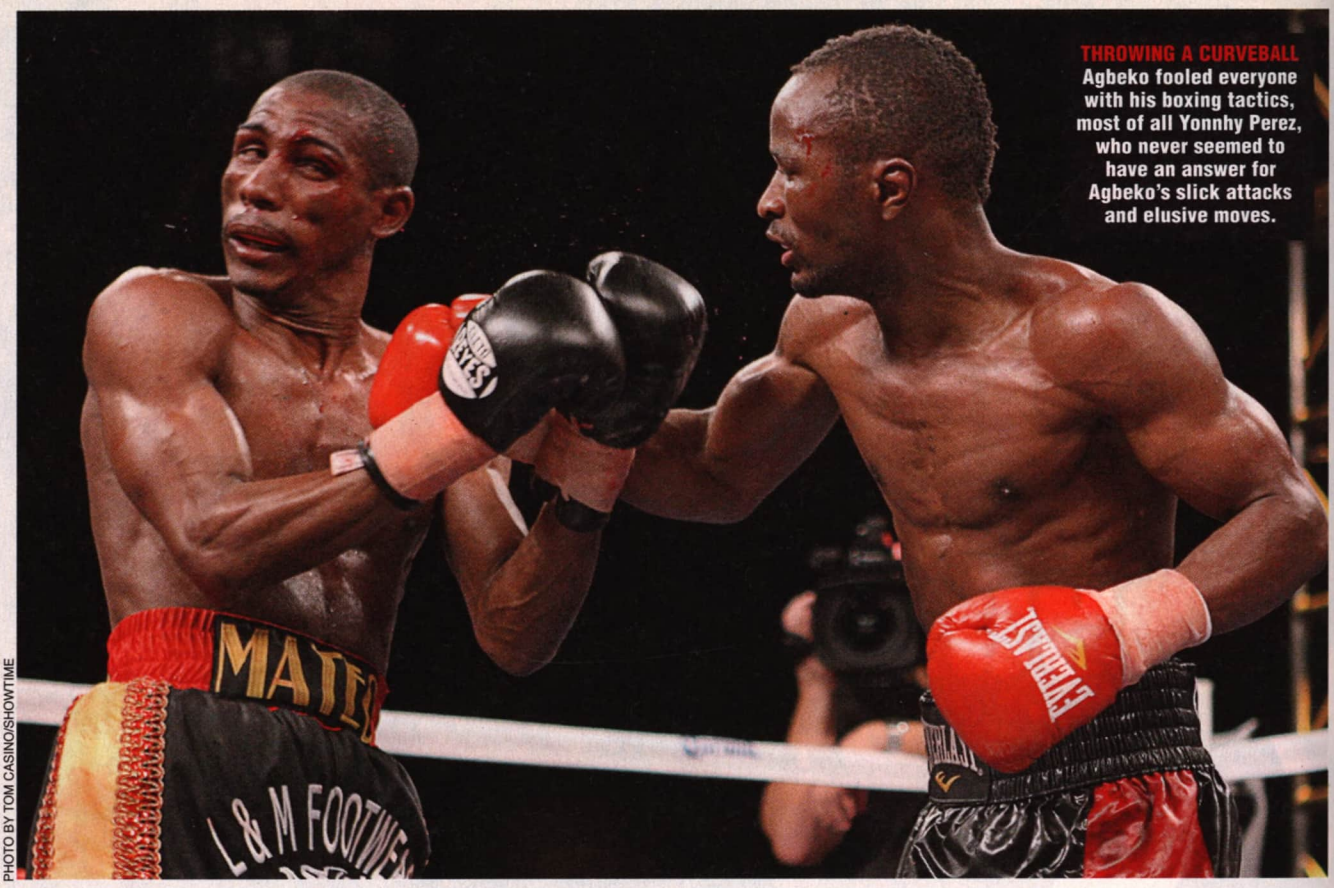
On opening night, the four participants reminded everyone what the tournament didn't lack. It didn't lack talent, heart, the promise of youth, versatility, tactical shock, reasonable judging despite the differential in one split decision, or the ability to spur the public to crave the next round. And because of the clean four-man, single-elimination tournament, with only a championship and consolation bout remaining, that craving will be satiated quickly, in an easily understood format.

Early next spring, Agbeko and unbeaten Abner Mares, will meet in the tournament final. That, in itself, may come as some surprise, with Agbeko beating the previously undefeated Perez on a unanimous decision and the rising star Mares edging veteran fan favorite Vic Darchinyan on a split-decision in the other semifinal, both contested December 11 at Emerald Queen Casino in Tacoma, Washington.

The real surprise came in the styles of the victories, particularly that of Agbeko, a fighter who calls himself "King Kong" but fought more like a street

MOVING ON
When the four fighters for Showtime's bantamweight tournament were announced, Joseph Agbeko and Abner Mares seemed to be the least likely to advance. But after they each pulled off mild upsets in the semifinals, Agbeko and Mares won't be so chummy in the finals.

PHOTOS BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME



THROWING A CURVEBALL Agbeko fooled everyone with his boxing tactics, most of all Yonnhy Perez, who never seemed to have an answer for Agbeko's slick attacks and elusive moves.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

chimp, dancing to Perez' predictable beat and taking all of his valuables in the process. When Perez, 20-1-1 (14), chose to press the fight, which was often until the theft of his last precious asset—his energy—he did it in a pursuit and at a pace, which was equally straightforward.

Agbeko took everything away. He was savvy, diverse, intuitively switched to boxing whenever Perez tried to brawl, brawled when Perez took the slightest step back, and made a top-flight bantamweight look robotic.

More than a year earlier, Agbeko had lost a one-sided decision to Perez. In that fight, a clash of heads, induced by Perez, contributed to the only knockdown Agbeko has suffered in his career. Agbeko had not fought since that loss, on Halloween night in 2009. Concerns about the convincing win for the 31-year-old Perez in the first fight and the 13½-month layoff loomed over the 30-year-old Agbeko.

None of it mattered.

"I lost this belt. I intended to be a champion forever, a very long time. But, unfortunately, I lost to Yonnhy Perez last year," Agbeko said. "I wanted to come back and try to regain my title again. I thank my team for preparing me to regain my title and become a champion again."

Perhaps as surprising was Mares, 25, rallying from an early deficit against the veteran Darchinyan, 35-3-1 (27). The Armenian banked the early rounds. Mares suffered a nasty gash on his scalp line, on the left side of his forehead, from a first-round clash of heads. He was victim of a flash knockdown in the second round. He had a point deducted for low blows in the fourth round.

Yet by the time the 12-round bout had ended, Darchinyan, who turned 35 less than a month after the fight, was the one complaining about referee Robert Howard—for reasons probably directly related to which fighter's hand Howard raised—and Mares, 21-0-1 (13), was advancing to the tournament championship bout against Agbeko, 28-2 (22).

That fight, which has yet to be scheduled, surely will not face as many obstacles as the semifinals, which required the organization and cooperation of four separate promotional factions and a variety of alphabet sanctioning bodies. The Agbeko-Perez and Mares-Darchinyan fights originally were planned for Leon, Mexico until a site survey disclosed prohibitive security costs in a region devastated by drug-cartel violence.

The original grand plan also called for the inclusion of Fernando Montiel and Nonito Donaire in the tournament field, which proved fruitless when Top Rank refused to put arguably the two most marketable fighters in the 118-pound region into such a high-risk event when it could make a windfall by having them fight each other in early 2011 instead.

What Showtime ended up with was a tournament with two compelling semifinals and a wide range of possibilities for the future, based on certain outcomes. If Darchinyan beats Perez in the consolation fight, could he emerge as a logical next opponent for the Agbeko-Mares winner, given the disputed decisions he lost to each man previously? If Mares beats Agbeko, wouldn't a rematch with Perez, with whom a draw is the only mar on his record, be a natural? And if Agbeko-Mares is an absolute shootout, at the conclusion of a tournament contested in a brisk, easy-to-follow pace, might not an immediate rematch be in order?

At worst, the tournament champion figures to produce something of a public outcry for a matchup against the Montiel-Donaire winner, to what extent there ever is a public outcry over bantamweights.

"I said before this tournament started that we didn't need Montiel or Donaire," Mares said. "The real fighters who wanted to step up and take the risks involved in this kind of tournament did it. The first two fights showed who the real fighters are."

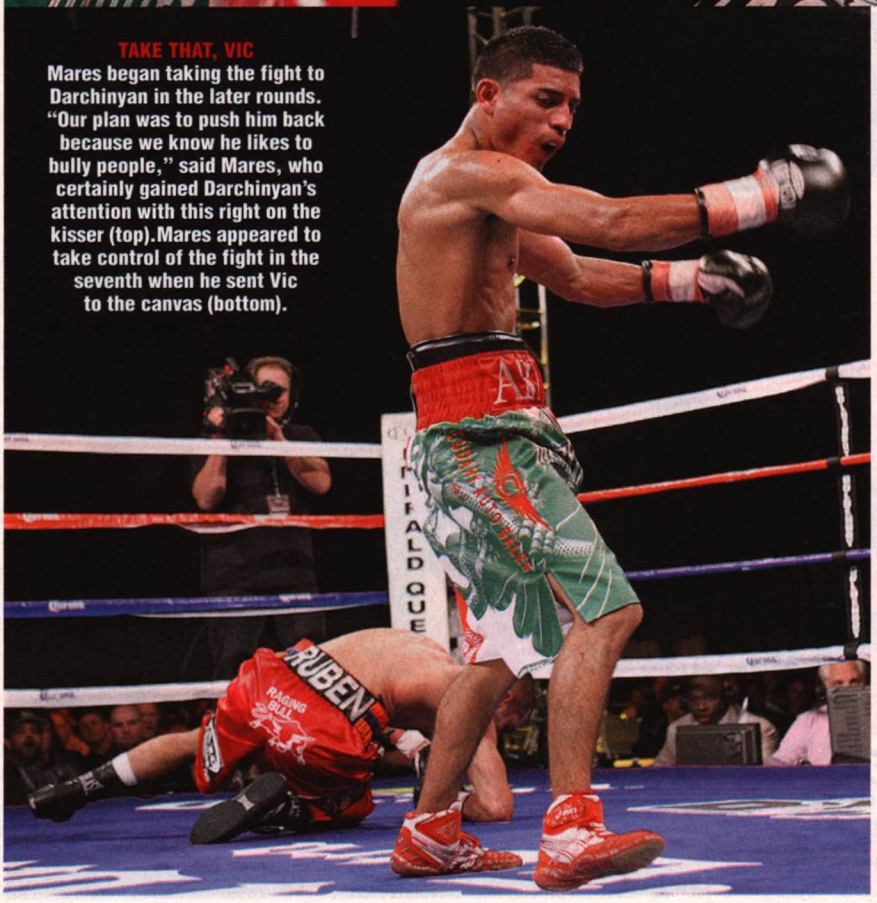
PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

REBOUNDING NICELY

Vic Darchinyan seemed to have his way with the younger, less-experienced Mares in the early rounds (top). Mares was the victim of a flash knockdown in the second and lost a point for low blows in the fourth. But the cut along his hairline (bottom), caused by a clash of heads in the first, seemed to give Mares his biggest trouble.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

PHOTO BY STEPHEN BRASHEAR/TOM HOGAN PHOTOS/GBP



TAKE THAT, VIC
Mares began taking the fight to Darchinyan in the later rounds. "Our plan was to push him back because we know he likes to bully people," said Mares, who certainly gained Darchinyan's attention with this right on the kisser (top). Mares appeared to take control of the fight in the seventh when he sent Vic to the canvas (bottom).

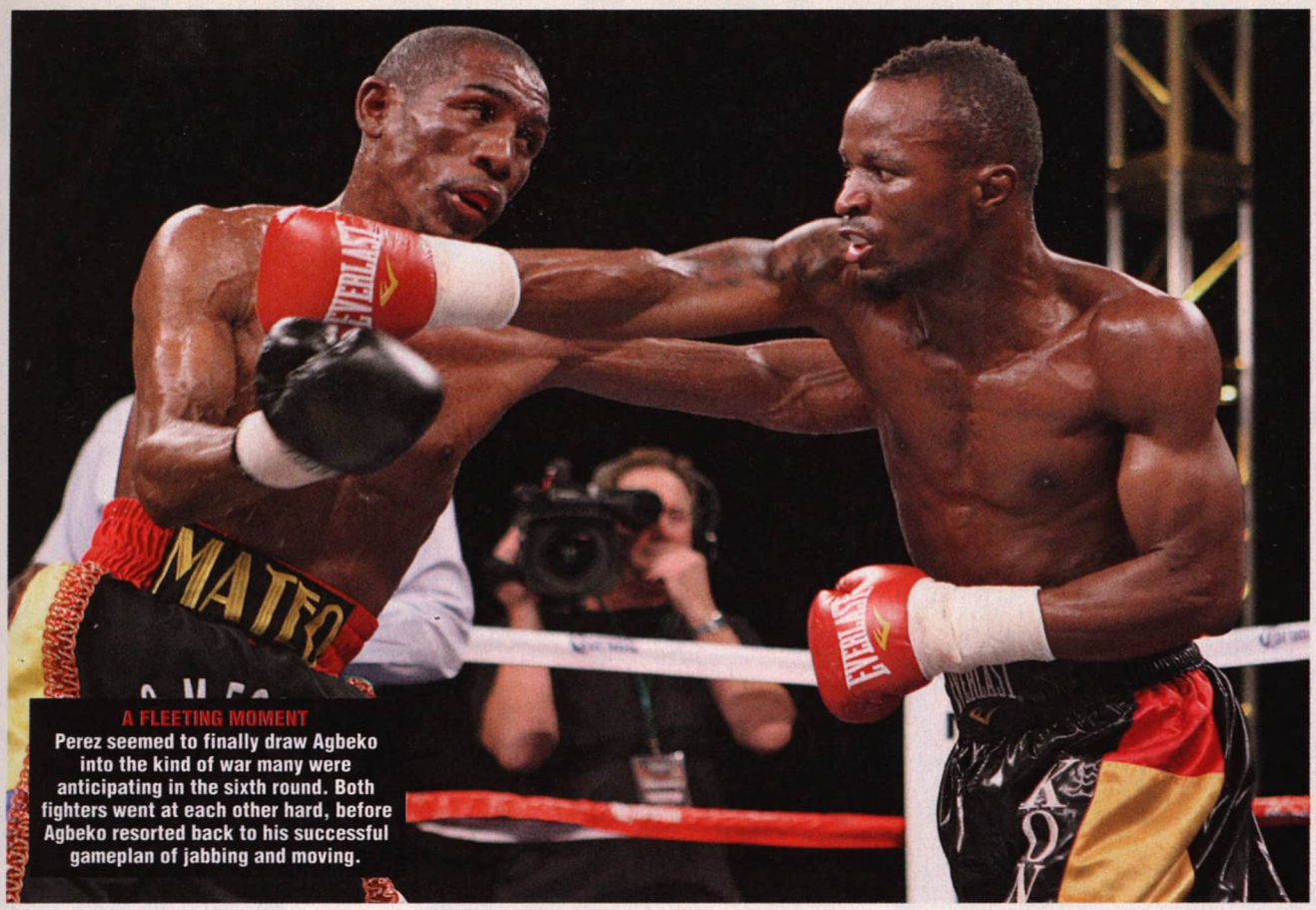
PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Mares, however, was just as surprised by Agbeko's event-defining performance as anyone. He openly wanted a rematch with Perez after their May 2010 draw on the Rafael Marquez-Israel Vasquez IV card at Staples Center in Los Angeles. After Mares returned from a quick hospital visit to get his head stitched following his victory over Darchinyan, he granted an interview to Showtime's Steve Farhood in which he expressed surprise that Agbeko was winning the fight.

Days later, he still was surprised.

"I was impressed how Agbeko was able to box Perez," Mares said. "That's something he hadn't shown before. But that's just another reason why this tournament is the best thing that could happen to the bantamweight division, because it shows how the best fighters with the best skills rise to the top."

Mares, after falling behind early, mounted his comeback behind a pitiless body attack. Darchinyan, assumed the role of boxer against Mares' aggression, slowed noticeably as the fight progressed, and suffered a seventh-round knockdown. Mares won the 11th and 12th rounds on all three scorecards, which earned him the victory on the scorecards of Alan Krebs (115-112) and Tom



A FLEETING MOMENT
Perez seemed to finally draw Agbeko into the kind of war many were anticipating in the sixth round. Both fighters went at each other hard, before Agbeko resorted back to his successful gameplan of jabbing and moving.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

McDonough (115-111), the latter of whom awarded him the final seven rounds. Glen Hamada had it 115-111 for Darchinyan.

"Our plan was to push him back because we know he likes to bully people," Mares said. "He has a tremendous punch. I proved that I could take punches. I kept pushing him back. I heard him moan every time I landed a bodyshot."

As for Agbeko, he was feinting verbally throughout the prefight publicity, right up until the final press conference two days beforehand, when he said he expected to brawl with Perez.

"I expect a war against Perez," he said. "With bantamweights, there are always lots of explosions."

In fact, the explosions occurred only when Agbeko decided to light the fuse. The native of Accra, Ghana, fighting out of the Bronx, played a game of mental yo-yo with Perez, who seemed helpless to do anything about Agbeko's tactical adjustments.

In the fourth round, Perez, who is from Cartagena, Colombia, but fights out of Santa Fe Springs, California, suffered a bad cut over his left eye from a short, seemingly innocuous jab. The cut had little effect, although it might have portended the brawl that broke out two rounds later.

That sixth round was Perez' moment, the one shift in fight momentum that Agbeko seemed not to anticipate, at least not at that very moment, when both men finally got off their toes and fought, at Perez' behest. Alas, for Perez, the moment of tactical indifference by Agbeko was short-lived. Agbeko started the seventh round jabbing and moving, then ripped Perez with a right uppercut. He spent much of that round starting and finishing exchanges, and sliding deftly away after punctuating his combinations with power shots.

Agbeko started the eighth round boxing until he sensed Perez in a lull and again cranked up his offense. When Perez responded in the ninth round by winging heavy shots early, Agbeko resumed his safe boxing distance, until the last two rounds, when Perez no longer possessed enough firepower to inspire any concern in Agbeko, and the beating became more pronounced.

When it ended, Gary Shaw, who promotes Perez and spent much of the prefight publicity chiding Agbeko for being a dirty fighter—all of it dating to head clashes during Agbeko's narrow decision win over Darchinyan and Perez' win over Agbeko, both in 2009—praised the Ghanaian's performance, telling him "You put a whupping" on Perez.

"You can't criticize anything Agbeko did," Shaw said. "He was brilliant. It was a great game plan and a great performance."

Perez also praised his conqueror's ring intelligence, saying he "did not expect this game plan from Agbeko."

That left Perez to fight Darchinyan in a fight many might have expected for the tournament championship, rather than the consolation bout.

It also left Mares to ponder the diversity of Agbeko, rather than a rematch against Perez.

"He showed some sides of himself he hadn't shown before," Mares said. "But this tournament is designed to bring out the best in great fighters, just like it did for me against Darchinyan. I'm ready for the challenge."

Agbeko, meantime, declined to contemplate too much about Mares until after the fight's date and location are set, sometime in early 2011.

But he did not leave Tacoma promising a war against Mares in the same fashion he did before his tactical destruction of Perez.

"It's going to be," Agbeko said, "a very beautiful fight."

***David Mayo covers boxing for the* Grand Rapids *(Michigan)* Press *and is a regular contributor to* The Ring.**

FROZE

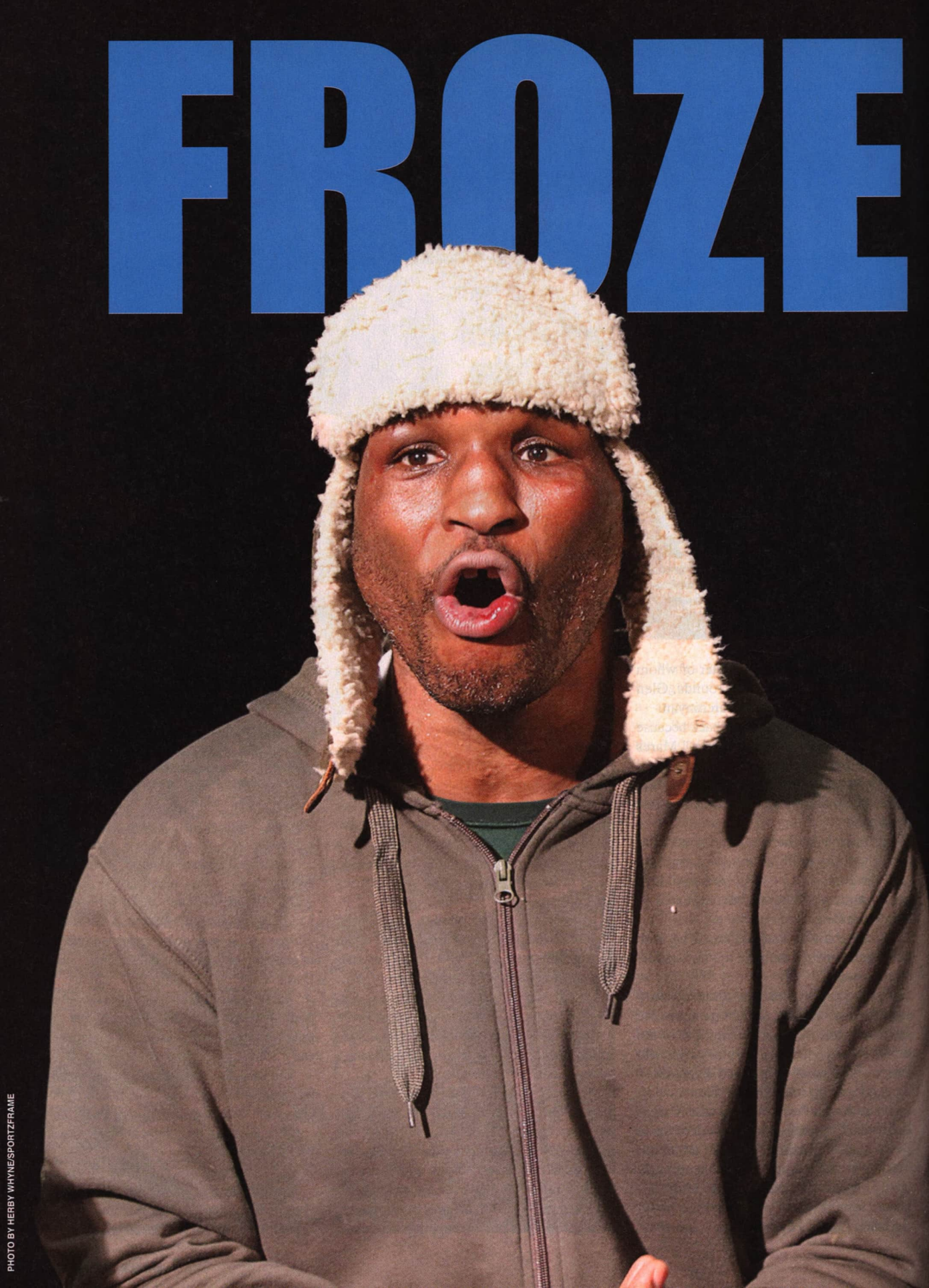


PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

N OUT!

Did Hopkins Get Hosed In Canada?

By Paul Salgado

Richard Schaefer, the CEO of Golden Boy Promotions, had sung the praises of Canada in the days leading up to 45-year-old Bernard Hopkins' quixotic challenge of the young Quebecois sensation, Jean Pascal for THE RING magazine light heavyweight championship belt.

Especially impressive to Schaefer was the fan base in Quebec, where boxing cards are gate-driven attractions with passionate support of its local fighters. Tickets for the Pascal vs. Hopkins rivalry had almost completely sold out within two days of going on sale, and it was real meat-and-potatoes fight fans paying good money to fill the 16,000 plus seats in the Pepsi Colisee where the fight was held amid the vintage beauty of Quebec City, nestled along the frigid waters of the St. Lawrence River.

Schaefer acknowledged there was much to be learned from the business model virtually perfected by Pascal's promoter, Yvon Michel of GYM Promotions, in developing his stable at the regional level.

Michel's astute eye for finding and marketing fighters with a perfect blend of talent and charisma on a local stage has ultimately translated into several title belts for his charges and a stellar international reputation for GYM. It has also made Quebec—particularly Montreal—a "go to" destination for watching serious world-class boxing.

Schaefer was so impressed, he announced at a round-table with the press that Golden Boy would be adopting the same business template to develop local talent in Brooklyn beginning in 2011.

"We are also looking at promoting a fight in Toronto," Schaefer enthusiastically added, believing there was more gold to be mined from fight fans in Canada's largest city.

Seven hours later, Schaefer, sat at a makeshift dais inside the Pepsi Colisee, his cherubic features glowing red with rage. With Hopkins sitting to his left dabbing a towel at a swollen lip he'd sustained courtesy of Pascal's fists, Schaefer was in full tirade.

This time, he was vowing never to bring a Golden Boy fighter back to Canada again.

Given Hopkins own history of tirades, it was somewhat humorous to see the Philadelphia legend, who had just been denied history when his impressive performance against Canada's Pascal was controversially scored a draw, actually placing a calming hand on Schaefer's shoulder and acting comparatively subdued.

The normally reserved former Swiss Banker was now in a threatening mood. Vowing to use "legal remedies" if Pascal proceeded with his contracted obligation to face Chad Dawson in a rematch in early 2011.

"He better not do that because, if he does, he's going to get stripped! We'll see to it and, if necessary, we will use our vast financial resources to sue the WBC, sue the Canadian commission or whatever it is. Let me put it like that. I am not going to stand here and take this!" railed Schaefer. " It's really a shame. It's a shame for Canada. It's a shame for boxing … It's bad for Pascal. If you guys think that Pascal helps himself with this kind of decision, then you're wrong because boxing around the world is not going to embrace that decision very warmly."

Responding to Schaefer's accusations the next day, Michel was blunt: "We should be careful not to get mixed up in American bulls___. They think they can't lose, that a draw is impossible, and that someone cheated. This is what they can't accept: That they lost."

In truth, Pascal's stalemate with Hopkins may have been questionable, but boxing history has presented us with many more flagrant robberies. And, with apologies to Hopkins who

would have been 38 days older than George Foreman when he felled Michael Moorer to become the oldest man to win a world title, the draw with Pascal was not exactly grand larceny. Think of draws suffered by Pernell Whitaker against Julio Cesar Chavez or Lennox Lewis in his first fight with Evander Holyfield.

Still, Hopkins was not necessarily wrong when he looked out at the press corps and said: "I beat Pascal. If you really want to be honest, you know I fought a helluva fight. And you know that, had I gotten the decision like I was supposed to, you all wouldn't be saying that Pascal got robbed tonight."

At ringside in Quebec City, however, the press was genuinely split. Several favored the draw, including Fightnews Canada's Dave Spencer. Others were divided evenly between Hopkins, including Bernard Fernandez of the *Philadelphia Daily* News and Herb Zurkowsky of the *Montreal Gazette*. Others, like Showtime ringside analyst Antonio Tarver, narrowly favored Pascal.

"It was a great fight. But I don't think Hopkins won the fight. I gave the champion the last round and I think a draw was fair. I gave it to Pascal by one point, but it could have went either way," said Tarver. "I understand why Hopkins feels the way he does. [Judges] judge the fight by watching two fighters. They didn't judge the fight as [Hopkins] being a 45-year-old man doing what he did. If I had judged it that way, I would have it for Hopkins going away. But it's not about age; it's about the fight at hand. And Pascal was the champion. I don't think Hopkins did enough to take it from the champion."

Make no mistake, to see Hopkins in the ring on this night was to witness pure fighting genius by the former RING middleweight and light heavyweight champion. Fans would need to revisit his near flawless effort against Kelly Pavlik in '08, to find an equivalent worthy of his display against Pascal.

Hopkins, 174½, fought on virtually even terms in the opening stanza before Pascal, 174¼, caught him charging in with a powerful overhand right that sent Hopkins collapsing to all fours as he was tangled up in the ropes. Hopkins sprung to his feet immediately with a sheepish grin, protesting to referee Michael Griffin of Canada as he tolled the eight count that Pascal had hit him in the back of the head, driving him to the canvas. A fair call or not, it was the first time Hopkins had been down in 16 years.

Hopkins rebounded by controlling round two and was faring well in the third before a pair of explosive left hooks from Pascal stunned him and left him sagging on the ropes before touching down on the canvas with both gloves. Hopkins jumped to his feet quickly and came storming back, trading furiously with Pascal until the bell, but the round went firmly to the champion by two points on all three judge's cards.

Against Hopkins, the fleet-footed Pascal's punches came in their usual sweeping arcs, while on occasion he scored with cracking lead rights and sharp left hooks.

But Pascal's tendency to bide his time and fight in sudden, quick bursts perfectly played to Hopkins favor. Since turning 40-something, if he has been able to control the tempo, Hopkins has always earned a victory.

Against Pascal, Hopkins scored selectively, often with a sneaky lead left hook, while managing the pace of the fight to his liking. And by round four, it was clear his signature punch would be a repeated and authoritative left hook to Pascal's midriff, designed to slow the champion's mobility.

Although round five was virtually a stalemate, rounds six and seven went to a more aggressive Hopkins, 51-5-2 (32), who landed the cleaner blows. By round eight, Pascal, 26-1-1 (16), was sporting a welt beneath his right eye, his legs looked weakened, and his offense now appeared more apprehensive than calculated.

In an "On the Ropes" radio interview a few days afterward, Pascal had a different explanation: "I was too cautious because of his head. I was worried to get cut because Bernard used a lot of his head and his forehead. That's why I was really careful to throw my punches close to him."

As Hopkins took full control in round nine, a different buzz of excitement began to take hold in the arena. Hopkins scored with several overhand rights, seemingly stunning Pascal at one point. There was a growing sense that history was about to be made, and the audience, which had been behind Pascal all night, suddenly threw up a brief chant in support of Hopkins.

Over the next two rounds, the fight remained competitive, but Pascal looked wide-eyed between exchanges, truly stunned by Hopkins capacity to belabor his body and outwork him. Before the 12th, the champion's cornerman, Marc Ramsay, yelled: "You need to work like you've

DOWN GOES B-HOP! Pascal built a big lead early by knocking down Hopkins in both the first and third rounds.

“You try to make comparisons for Hopkins, exactly who he stacks up with at this age? I could only come up with two names: Gordie Howe and Nolan Ryan.”

—Bernard Fernandez

PHOTO BY ROGERIO BARBOSA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

never worked before. You need to win this round!"

Fired-up, Pascal went out and immediately traded bombs. Still, he soon found himself trapped along the ropes as Hopkins pressed him, scoring with left hooks and short right hands. Pascal would fire back, landing a whistling overhand right, as both men worked until the final bell amid the cheers of a frenzied crowd. While it looked like Hopkins had done a little more to close the show, Showtime's Al Bernstein, commentating from ringside declared the decision would be "razor close."

And it was, with only Steve Morrow (USA) scoring a clear-cut victory for Hopkins by a score of 114-112, which was in line with THE RING's scorecard of 115-112. Canadian judge, Claude Paquette, scored 113-113, but it was Belgium judge Daniel Van de Wiele that drew the most fire from Team Hopkins after carding 114-114.

Schaefer had criticized Van de Wiele for scoring the 10th even, when his two counterparts scored it for Hopkins in a round he clearly won. Had Van de Wiele done the same, Hopkins would have won the championship by the narrowest of margins.

"If you are a top international judge, you should not be scoring 10-10 rounds. As for judges like Van de Wiele, these guys have been around the world and they know how to play the game. They have to be approved by a promoter. Honestly, I don't think the world's most objective judges are the ones sought after by promoters. I am not a conspiracy theorist, but these guys survive on the international circuit for a reason. They know where their bread is buttered," said Jason Abelson, the host of "Pound 4 Pound" radio, a boxing talk show that airs weekly on Sirius Satellite. "If you have it 7-5, then it's a draw because of the two rounds so it's not a travesty of a decision. But it was clear after 12 rounds who the better fighter was. The official decision had no bearing on what you saw in the ring, and that was that Hopkins was far classier and far better than Pascal was."

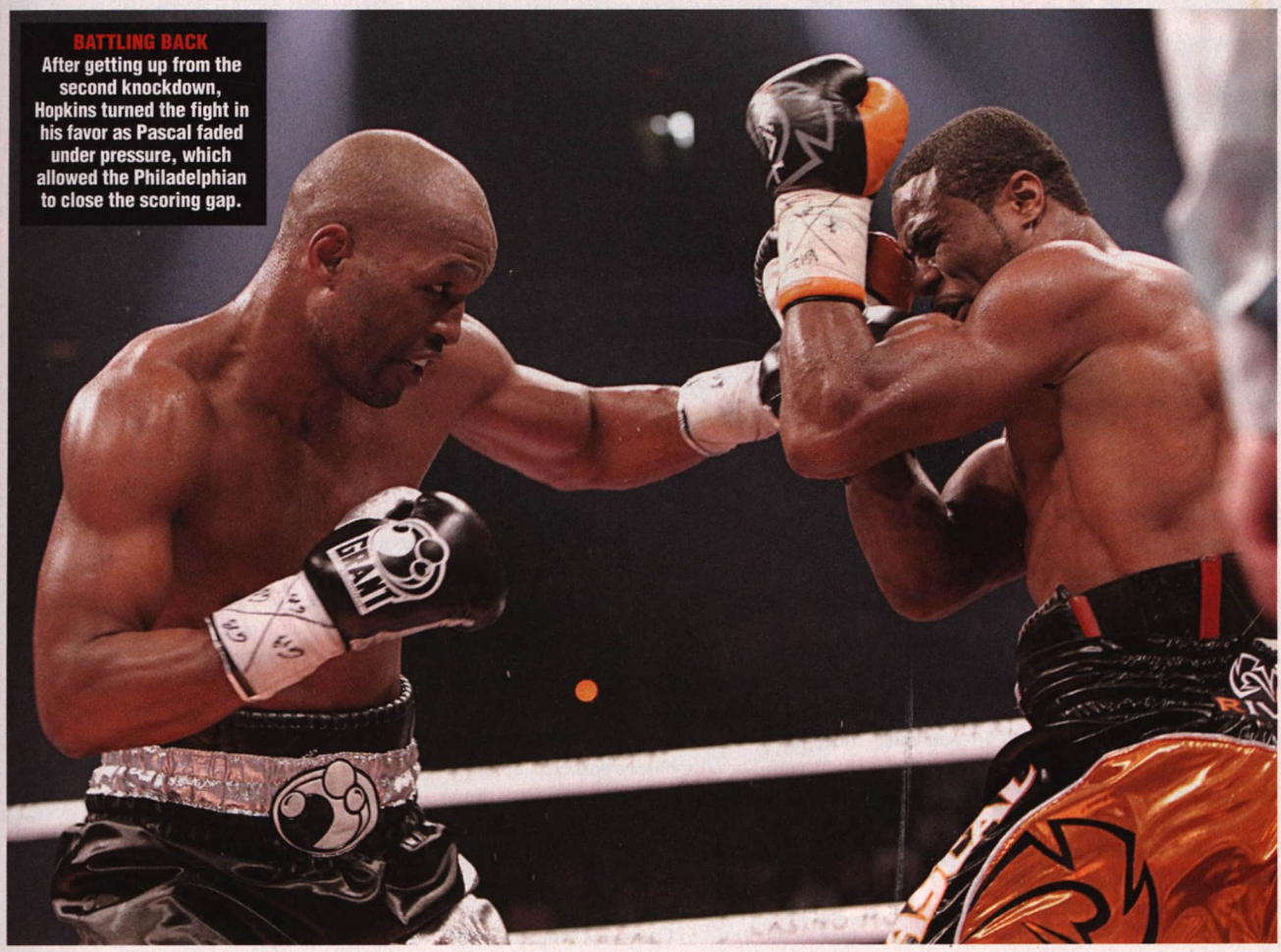
So the question is, short of a rematch, where does each fighter go from here?

Pascal certainly has the better options. He is contracted to fight Chad Dawson in a rematch in early 2011, and, according to Michel, he will fulfill the commitment. The Dawson fight will certainly land back in Quebec given the lucrative market. Meanwhile Pascal's old rival, Carl Froch has expressed an interest in facing him again in Montreal after the Brit concludes the "Super Six" super middleweight tournament. And, of course looming somewhere in the future will be a mega-million dollar shootout with Quebec rival Lucian Bute, who was an interested observer at ringside.

But one has to wonder whether Pascal's reputation might have suffered in the aftermath of the draw.

"I am pretty bearish on Pascal to be honest," said Abelson. "It was startling how fast he faded and why he faded. Hopkins applied pressure, and Pascal wilted. And when Chad Dawson finally decided to apply some pressure, he wilted then too, although Dawson waited longer than Hopkins. But I think there is a case to be made for earlier concerns that Pascal wilts under adversity. A lot of people stopped thinking it after the Froch fight, which was a great performance, but I think maybe you can start thinking about it again."

For Hopkins, the options are somewhat more limited. And while he did not fight like a man who should retire, that does not necessarily mean he shouldn't.



BATTLING BACK
After getting up from the second knockdown, Hopkins turned the fight in his favor as Pascal faded under pressure, which allowed the Philadelphian to close the scoring gap.

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

PREMATURE CELEBRATION
At the final bell, Hopkins raised his arms in victory, figuring he had just become the oldest boxer to win a world title. But when the scorecards were read, Pascal retained the title via majority draw.

PHOTO BY ROGERIO BARBOSA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

"You try to make comparisons for Hopkins, exactly who he stacks up with at this age? I could only come up with two names: Gordie Howe and Nolan Ryan," said Fernandez, who has witnessed Hopkins entire career in covering boxing for the *Daily News*. "I think from the standpoint of all the young guns at 175 pounds. What this fight has done is make them say: 'We don't want any part of this guy.' Even if you win, it's going to be tough and people are going to say: 'He's a 46-year-old guy. You are supposed to beat him.' So its low reward with a lot of risk to fight him, which is why a lot of people don't want to fight him. So he may have to retire simply on the basis that nobody's going to want to fight him."

Well, almost nobody. Hopkins did receive overtures from Tavoris Cloud the day after his draw with Pascal. And while it would be an intriguing fight, the high pressure, voluminous punching Cloud could prove all wrong for the old fox.

If he were to continue fighting, Hopkins best option would be to compel Dawson to step aside and revisit the rivalry with Pascal in Canada. Controversy aside, in truth, a rematch between the two would not do the numbers stateside that it would north of the border. Pascal is popular in Quebec, but his fight with Dawson barely garnered 8,000 in Montreal. The reality is Quebec City drew huge numbers because Hopkins is a certifiable legend, and there is even more money to be made if he were to return.

Sure, Hopkins vowed the closest he would ever come again to Canada is Niagara Falls, but he is a pragmatist; the mathematics of a financial spreadsheet is just as important to him as the mathematics of a judge's scorecard.

At the end of the night, as he strode from the Colisee out to a waiting car, Schaefer proved himself a pragmatist too. He reiterated that the bad decision and poor officiating hurt Canada's reputation but emphasized: "I am not blaming Yvon Michel."

The subtext was simple: Controversies or not, you cannot argue with 16,000 fans in the stands. Quebec is going to remain a favored boxing destination for a very long time. ■

Paul Salgado, THE RING's Canada correspondent, was ringside in Quebec City for Pascal-Hopkins.

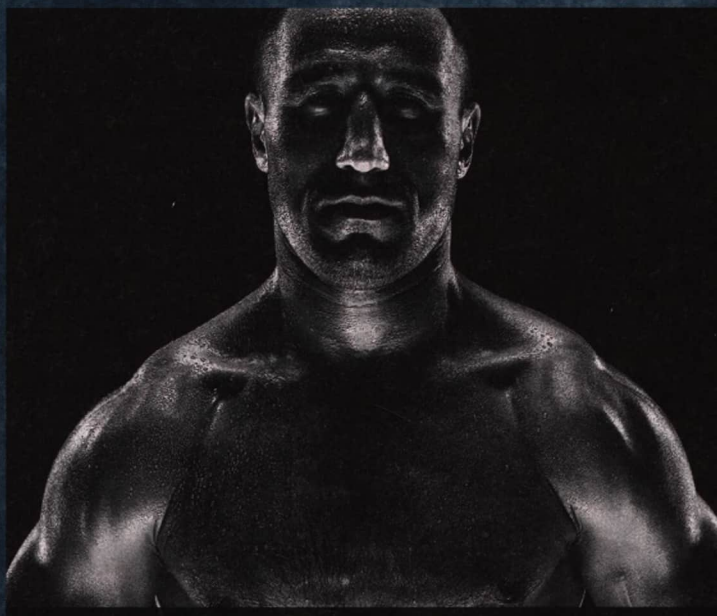
SUPER SIX

WORLD BOXING CLASSIC

THE SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

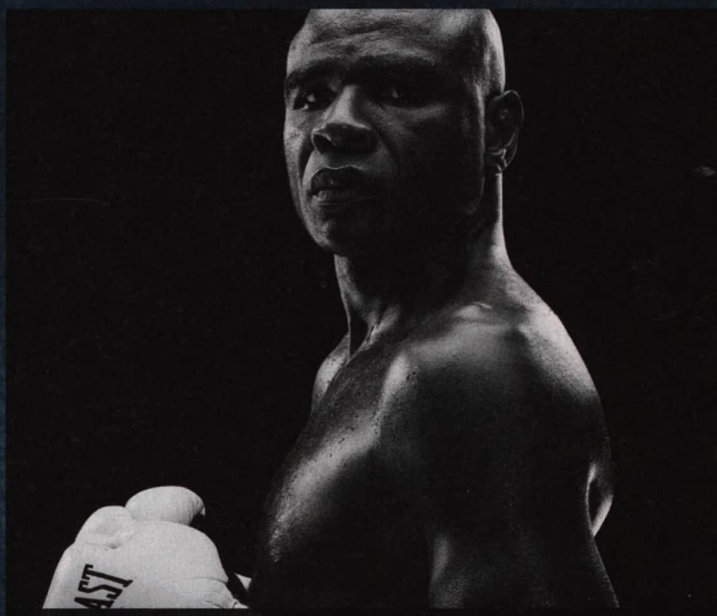
THE SEMIFINALS

ANDRE WARD



ARTHUR ABRAHAM

CARL FROCH



GLEN JOHNSON

SAUERLAND EVENT

HENNESSY SPORTS

dbe DIBELLA ENTERTAINMENT

Goossen Tutor PROMOTIONS

COMING SOON SHOWTIME®

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FROM HELSINKI TO OAKLAND

Froch And Ward Ready For Super Six Final Four

By Don Stewart

It was two fights on the same night on different continents in cities separated by more than 5,000 miles in distance and 40 degrees in temperature. One turned out to be a clean, one-sided boxing lesson, the other a messy, rugged affair that was something like a demolition derby.

When it was over, nothing much had changed for Showtime's "Super Six World Boxing Classic." The same four fighters were rolling into the semifinals, with Andre Ward still leading the way. On the surface, really all that was resolved were the semifinal matchups. Dennis Green's infamous "They are who we thought they were," NFL postgame rant seemed apt.

And, really, neither bout on the November 27 doubleheader that closed out Group Stage 3 truly shook up the Super Six: Ward survived a rough non-tournament meeting with Sakio Bika in Oakland, California, while Carl Froch boxed Arthur Abraham silly in Helsinki, Finland. Instead of shakeups, what we got was further data backing up previous findings unearthed during the first two rounds. These guys are pretty much who we

TALE OF TWO CITIES
Froch and his girlfriend Rachael Cordingley celebrate Froch's one-sided decision over Abraham in Helsinki, Finland, (opposite page). Later that same day, Ward won a rugged decision over Bika in Oakland, California (above) in a non-tournament bout.

CARL FROCH: PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES
ANDRE WARD: PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

AT ARM'S LENGTH
Froch boxed surprisingly well from the outside, jabbing and moving, while Abraham seldom mounted much offense. It was a different style than the one the Englishman used in his two previous Super Six appearances.

PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

COVERING UP
Abraham hid behind his gloves and forearms throughout much of the 12-rounder, but Froch was able to penetrate his guard with persistence and timing. Froch said he was tempted to open up but stuck to the conservative battle plan and won with relative ease.

"There were times when the old me would have steamed in and got into a bit of a brawl then. That would have been dangerous, and it would have been silly because Arthur Abraham is a big puncher and a very strong man. He knows what he's doing."

—Carl Froch

figured they were heading into Stage 3, but, thanks to a tournament format that's created so many high-level fights in a relatively short period, we know a lot more about them than we did when the tournament began in October 2009.

At that time, odds were released that had Abraham and Mikkel Kessler as even favorites. The odds were 2-to-1 on Froch, 5-to-2 on Ward and Andre Dirrell, and 10-to-1 on Jermain Taylor. As reflected in those odds, it was assumed the Europeans would dominate as Ward and Dirrell were largely untested, and Taylor was a beaten horse.

Nearly 14 months later, we now know that Ward is a budding superstar worthy of the gold-medal hype he carried into the professional ranks. We've discovered that Abraham is a one-dimensional puncher. We've learned that Froch and Dirrell were probably better than we'd assumed, and Kessler a little worse. Unfortunately for Taylor, there were no surprises there.

We also know that the Super Six's ambitious round-robin format, while it's led to some fantastic fights, might not be practical at this level. Three of the original six fighters—Taylor, Dirrell, and Kessler—have had to abandon ship in midstream due to injuries. Former light heavyweight champ Glen Johnson, who will be 42 when he meets Froch in the semifinals, managed to advance by jumping into the tournament and stopping Taylor-replacement Allan Green earlier in Stage 3.

After his embarrassingly one-sided loss to Froch, Abraham could end up joining the list of dropouts before meeting Ward in their semifinal. Ward-Abraham hardly seems worth the effort after the manner in which Froch outpointed "King Arthur."

Following a roadmap crafted in Stage 2 by Dirrell, Froch controlled the distance on Abraham with his longer jab and superior movement. He consistently snuck a right hand to the body through Abraham's shell defense, with Abraham's high-held gloves making it tough for the Armenia-born German to counter.

"I said from the start that I'm too good," Froch said in the ring afterward. "Too much boxing ability, too much amateur pedigree, too much range. The sharpness was there. The range was there. The boxing skills, the ability. I knew that if I used and executed my game plan perfectly, it could be an easy night's work. I said that to a few people, and I proved that tonight."

Froch, 27-1 (20), was incredibly disciplined despite his dominance. He drove Abraham, 31-2 (25), into the ropes frequently but never went all out for the kayo. Abraham, who had a mouse under his right eye by the end of the seventh, laid on the ropes in an effort to sucker Froch inside early in the eighth. When Froch didn't take the bait, Abraham threw a forearm at Froch. He landed his best shot of the night 15 seconds before the round ended, a hard left hook to the head that momentarily buckled Froch's knees. Froch quickly shook it off and went back to thumping Abraham from a comfortable distance.

Judges Oren Schellenberger (USA) and Max DeLuca (USA) scored it a shutout at 120-108, while Burt Clements (USA) had it 119-109, all for Froch. THE RING also had it 119-109, with the final round going to Abraham. Clements scored the ninth for King Arthur.

"I sat behind my jab, I used my range and boxing ability," Froch said. "There were so many times I wanted to step in and start unloading shots. There were times when the old me would have steamed in and got into a bit of a brawl then. That would have been dangerous, and it would have been silly because Arthur Abraham is a big puncher and a very strong man. He's knows what he's doing."

It didn't appear that way against Froch. Abraham has a powerful right hand, but he never used the jab to set it up. He showed no lateral movement and seemed to have no idea how to cut off the ring against a taller boxer. He mostly just stood in front of Froch and tried to block punches, which resulted in a face that was a swollen mess by the final bell. "Everything that I planned to do didn't work," Abraham said in the ring afterward, through a translator.

The 30-year-old Abraham clearly didn't help himself with his sluggish work rate. Though he was often flailing at air when he did throw, Abraham managed to land 151 of 341 shots, while the much busier Froch connected on 294 of 657 punches. Several German media outlets quoted trainer Ulli Wegner calling Abraham a coward between rounds, and, afterward, Wegner told the German press that Abraham "has no honor in his body to allow himself to get beat up like that. That was shameful." Averaging just 28 punches per round isn't likely to cut it against the dynamic Ward.

"I think that's definitely something that's a downside for him," Ward said in the ring after getting past Bika. "It may be too late to change that. He said he's gonna come out faster. How can you do that if you've done that all these years, been a champion and been successful? Why would you change that now? How can you change? I don't think he's gonna change. I think he's gonna be the same old Abraham."

Against Ward, Bika was the same old Bika. "The Scorpion" is one of those awkward opponents who is almost impossible to look good against, and the Cameroon-born Australian gave Ward problems with his style, rugged infighting tactics, five-inch reach

LASHING OUT

The always-difficult Bika did well early in his non-tournament bout with Ward and never stopped trying to impose his will. How judge Marty Sammons could fail to give Bika a single round boggles the mind.

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

CLOSING THE SHOW

In the end, Ward's superior skills and speed were just too much for Bika to handle. Ward pulled away the second half of the bout, racking up a lot of points with his accurate left jab, while avoiding most of Bika's big shots.

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

"Personally, I like to look great and not only win but look good doing it. These kinds of fights are necessary, fighting a tough rugged guy like Bika and finding a way to get it done. He comes to win. And the bottom line is not how you win but if you win, and we were able to get the victory tonight."

—Andre Ward

advantage, and busier pace. Though almost every round in this fight was close, Bika appeared to have the edge early as Ward struggled to adjust.

Ward, 23-0 (13), began to solve Bika, 28-5-2 (19) in a fourth marked by entertaining back-and-forth action. Ward, who landed 235 of 398 shots on the night, generally landed the cleaner and harder shots. He also seemed determined to beat Bika at his own game, creating an often dirty fight filled with headbutts, forearms, elbows, and holding. Referee Dan Stell (California) earned his paycheck.

Despite a cut on his left eyelid, Ward began putting his punches together from the fourth round on as he consistently worked his way inside. He suffered a cut above his right eye in the sixth, but that didn't halt Ward's momentum. Bika, who rarely took a step back, finally began slowing down in the ninth. He suffered a cut of his own in the 10th, courtesy of a Ward headbutt. At the start of the 12th, trainer Ronnie Shields told The Scorpion that he needed a kayo. He won the round, stinging Ward with a solid left hook in the final 10 seconds, but "S.O.G." was never in any serious peril.

The final scores were a bit lopsided in favor of Ward, who has fought in his hometown in each of his three Super Six bouts. Marty Sammon (California) had it 120-108, while Jon Schorle (California) and Hunter Walton (Washington) each scored it 118-110. THE RING saw it 116-112 for Ward.

"Personally, I like to look great and not only win but look good doing it," Ward said. "These kinds of fights are necessary, fighting a tough rugged guy like Bika and finding a way to get it done. He comes to win. And the bottom line is not how you win but if you win, and we were able to get the victory tonight."

That he took this fight in the first place is a credit to Ward's character. With Dirrell out of the tournament due to the head injury suffered in his win against Abraham, Ward was left without a Stage 3 opponent. Assured the top seed heading into the semis, Ward wanted to stay active and could have chosen a stay-busy fight against a much lesser opponent. Instead, he took on Bika, THE RING's sixth-ranked super middleweight and, in perfect hindsight, a Super Six snub.

Bika's rough style should be ideal preparation for Abraham, if that fight happens. There was some concern in the days that followed Ward-Bika that Ward had suffered a broken finger, but Ward trainer Virgil Hunter told THE RING that a postfight MRI revealed no damage. As for Abraham, Hunter said he doesn't expect King Arthur to pull out, though there was much speculation that he would find a way out of what would have been a much anticipated matchup only a year ago.

As of mid-December, Abraham had only said that he would proceed as planned, though he also said he was planning to return to middleweight. "Today I can say I am not a super middleweight," Abraham told German newspaper *Bild*. "The others are bigger than me. I am always the smallest."

Abraham actually will have a one-inch reach advantage against Ward, quite a departure from his size deficit in recent bouts. But given what we've since learned about Ward's skill level and Abraham's surprising lack of ability, it's easy to envision another one-sided boxing lesson.

And given what we've learned, maybe Froch-Johnson will give us the slugfest many were hoping to see from Froch-Abraham. Johnson can still bring the power and pressure, is much savvier than Abraham, and has the same reach as Froch. Also, Froch is no defensive wizard, as evidenced by Abraham's 44-percent connect rate. But we have also learned that Froch is dynamic enough to get past the likes of Dirrell, Abraham, Kessler (almost), Taylor, and Jean Pascal.

"That's going to be a very interesting fight," Hunter said. "Abraham didn't push the issue. I feel Johnson will push the issue. Froch better be ready to fight him. Johnson looks very rejuvenated to me. I think Glen Johnson is definitely someone who will have to be reckoned with."

Unless Abraham proceeds with the fight and pulls off something spectacular, the Froch-Johnson winner will earn a spot in the final opposite Ward. Hunter admitted that he'd rather Ward reckon with Froch than Johnson. Not only would it be the more marketable matchup at this point, but the Englishman has irritated the Ward camp with a mouth that Froch admits often gives people "the wrong idea of me." On the other hand, Johnson might be the most likeable fighter in the sport.

"We're focused on Abraham; we have to be," Hunter said. "But from my position, Froch talks quite a bit. From a personal preference, I would prefer Froch [in the final]. But you have to take it as it comes. Certainly not discrediting Glen Johnson, but I think the public leans toward Ward-Froch.

"We just have to take it one fight at a time and make sure we get there."

Because if we've learned anything thus far, it's that little in this tournament seems to unfold as anticipated. ■

WORLDWIDE FIGHT RESULTS

Cruiserweights

Marco Huck W 12 Denis Lebedev
Yoan Hernandez KO 1 Ali Ismailov
Giulian Ilie W 12 Cristian Dolzanelli
Andreas Guenther W 12 Adam Gadajew
Silvio Branco W 12 Vincenzo Rossitto
Nuri Seferi W 12 Douglas Otieno
Carl Davis W 10 Arthur Williams
Bjoern Blaschke W 10 Jonathan Pasi
Taylor Mabika KO 9 Marco Heinichen
Lateef Kayode KO 6 Ed Perry
David Quinonero KO 7 Jesus Ruiz

Light Heavyweights

Jean Pascal D 12 Bernard Hopkins
(Retains World/WBC Titles)
Tavoris Cloud W 12 Fulgencio Zuniga
(Retains IBF Title)
Nathan Cleverly W 12 Nadjib Mohammedi
Kariz Kariuki W 12 Randy Griffin
Ismayl Syllakh W 10 Rayco Saunders

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Tomasz Adamek KO 5 Vinny Maddalone
Alexander Povetkin W 10 Nicolai Firtha
Oliver McCall W 12 Fres Oquendo
Jean Marc Mormeck W 12 Timur Ibragimov
Odlanier Solis W Disq. 10 Ray Austin
Petero Qica W 12 Mosese Kavika
Darrel Madison W 10 Michael Marrone
Cedric Boswell KO 9 Owen Beck
Tyson Fury W 8 Zack Page
Larry Olubamiwo KO 8 Paul Butlin
Seth Mitchell KO 5 Taurus Sykes
Travis Kauffman W Disq. 4 Ross Thompson
Deontay Wilder KO 1 Dan Sheehan

HEAD SNAPPER
Odlanier Solis jars Ray Austin with a left en route to DQ victory in an alphabet eliminator in Miami, Florida.

PHOTO BY MIKE EHRMANN/GETTY IMAGES

Shane McConville D 10 Blake Caparello
Tony Bellew KO 8 Ovill McKenzie

Super Middleweights

Andre Ward W 12 Sakio Bika
(Retains WBA Title)
Carl Froch W 12 Arthur Abraham
(Wins Vacant WBC Title)
David Lemieux KO 2 Purnell Gates
Ryan Rhodes KO 2 Rocky Junior
Les Sherrington W 12 Nader Hamdan
Serge Yannick W 12 Togasilimai Letoa
Piotr Wilczewski W 12 Karlo Tabaghua
Scott Sigmon W 10 Julius Kennedy
Ricardo Mayorga KO 9 Michael Walker

Middleweights

Matthew Macklin W 12 Ruben Varon
Garth Wood KO 5 Anthony Mundine
Osumanu Adama W 12 Angel Hernandez
Karama Nyilawila W 12 Kreshnik Qato
Dionisio Miranda W 12 Lajuan Simon
Stephen Abbey W 10 Ernest Amuzu
Pablo Navascues W 10 Luis Rodriguez
Billi Godoy KO 8 Javier Mamani
Pawel Wolak KO 7 Jose Pinzon
Mohammed Akrong KO 5 Edward Brew
Gennady Golovkin KO 3 Nilson Julio Tapia

Junior Middleweights

Saul Alvarez W 12 Lovemore N'dou
Zaurbek Baysangurov KO 12 Richard Gutierrez
Lukas Konecny W 12 Hamlet Petrosyan
Cedric Vitu W 10 Christophe Canclaux
Yassine El Maachi W 10 Jimmy Colas
David Estrada KO 5 Franklin Gonzalez
Rodrigo Garcia KO 4 Rodrigo Villarreal
Erislandy Lara KO 1 Tim Connors
Josue Atilano Mendoza KO 8 Mario Meraz

Welterweights

Andre Berto KO 1 Freddy Hernandez
(Retains WBC Title)
Paulie Malignaggi KO 6 Michael Lozada
Steve Forbes KO 2 Roberto Valenzuela
Rodolfo Martinez W 12 Mariano Robledo
Ismael El Massoudi W 12 Pathias Kambembe
Samuel Colomban W 12 Steve Heremaia
Brad Solomon W 10 Anges Adjaho
Joan Guzman KO 2 Jason Davis
Kell Brook KO 2 Philip Kotey
Gianluca Branco W 6 Semjons Moroseks
Hector Saldivia KO 5 Jorge Miranda
Carson Jones KO 1 Donovan Castaneda
Sadam Ali W 8 Manuel Guzman
Sharif Bogere W 8 Christopher Fernandez
Dmitriy Salita KO 3 James Wayka
Kevin Bizier KO 3 Ronnie Warrior Jr.

Junior Welterweights

Amir Khan W 12 Marcos Maidana
(Retains WBA Title)

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Joseph Agbeko W 12 Yonnhy Perez
(Wins IBF Title)
Abner Mares W 12 Vic Darchinyan
Nonito Donaire KO 4 Volodymyr Sydorenko
Thangthong Kiattaweesuk W 12 Nick Otieno
Zhanat Zhakiyanov W 10 Bahyt Abdurahimov
Yaqub Kareem D 10 Gabriel Laryea
Sergio Santillan W 10 Diego Loto
Ray Las Pinas KO 7 Ruben Santillanosa
Takuya Miyamori W 10 Jin-Ki Jung
Dayer Gabutan Tech. Win 6 Pol Apolinario

WAITING GAME
Bantamweight Abner Mares looks for an opening against Vic Darchinyan.

PHOTO BY STEPHEN BRASHEAR/HOGAN PHOTOS/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

Victor Ortiz D 10 Lamont Peterson
Erik Morales W 12 Francisco Lorenzo
Matthew Hatton KO 3 Roberto Belge
Prawet Singwancha W 12 Dan Nazareno Jr.
Yvan Mendy W 12 Sam Rukundo
Ville Piispanen D 12 Daniel Rasilla
Jamie Speight W 10 Ibrar Riyaz
Solomon Egberime KO 9 Daudy Bahari
Richard Abril KO 5 Miguel Munguia
Philipp Schuster KO 5 Suleyman Dag
Walter Estrada W 8 Nate Campbell
Holly Holm KO 8 Ann Saccurato

Lightweights

Juan Manuel Marquez KO 9 Michael Katsidis
(Retains World/WBA Titles)
Miguel Vazquez W 12 Ricardo Dominguez
(Retains IBF Title)
Humberto Soto W 12 Urbano Antillon, Anaheim, CA
(Retains WBC Title)
Chika Mizutani W 10 Shen Dan Yue
Alex Arthur W 8 Jay Morris
Emiliano Marsili W 10 Pasquale Di Silvio
Antonio Cervantes W 10 Jose Valdez

Junior Lightweights

Takahiro Ao W 12 Vitali Tajbert
(Wins WBC Title)
Jason Litzau W10 Celestino Caballero
Ricky Burns W 12 Andreas Evensen
Will Tomlinson W 12 Rey Labao
Joseph Laryea W 12 Paul Appleby
Arash Usmanee W 10 Pedro Navarrete
Randy Megrino W 10 Vicente Racuma
Masao Nakamura KO 5 Allan Tanada

Featherweights

Hozumi Hasegawa W 12 Juan Burgos
(Wins Vacant WBC Title)
Chris John W 12 Fernando David Saucedo
(Retains WBA Title)
Daniel Ponce De Leon KO 7 Sergio Manuel Medina
Christopher Perez W 12 Gilberto Bolanos
Jerome Thomas D 12 Joaquin Cespedes
Jonathan Ba at W 10 Xu Cong Liang
Jonathan Victor Barros KO 7 Irving Berry
Mikey Garcia KO 5 Olivier Lontchi
Victor Terrazas KO 2 Filomeno Jaramillo

Junior Featherweights

Fernando Montiel KO 2 Jovanny Soto
Eric Morel W 8 Juan Jose Beltran
Jorge Arce KO 1 Adolfo Ramos
Chris Avalos KO 4 Cecilio Santos
Scott Quigg W 12 Daniel Sassou
Jesus Galicia KO 7 Alberto Chuc

Junior Bantamweights

Cristian Mijares W 12 Juan Alberto Rosas
(Wins IBF Title)
Cesar Seda KO 1 Ernie Marquez
Yato Sato KO 7 Yuki Fukumoto

Flyweights

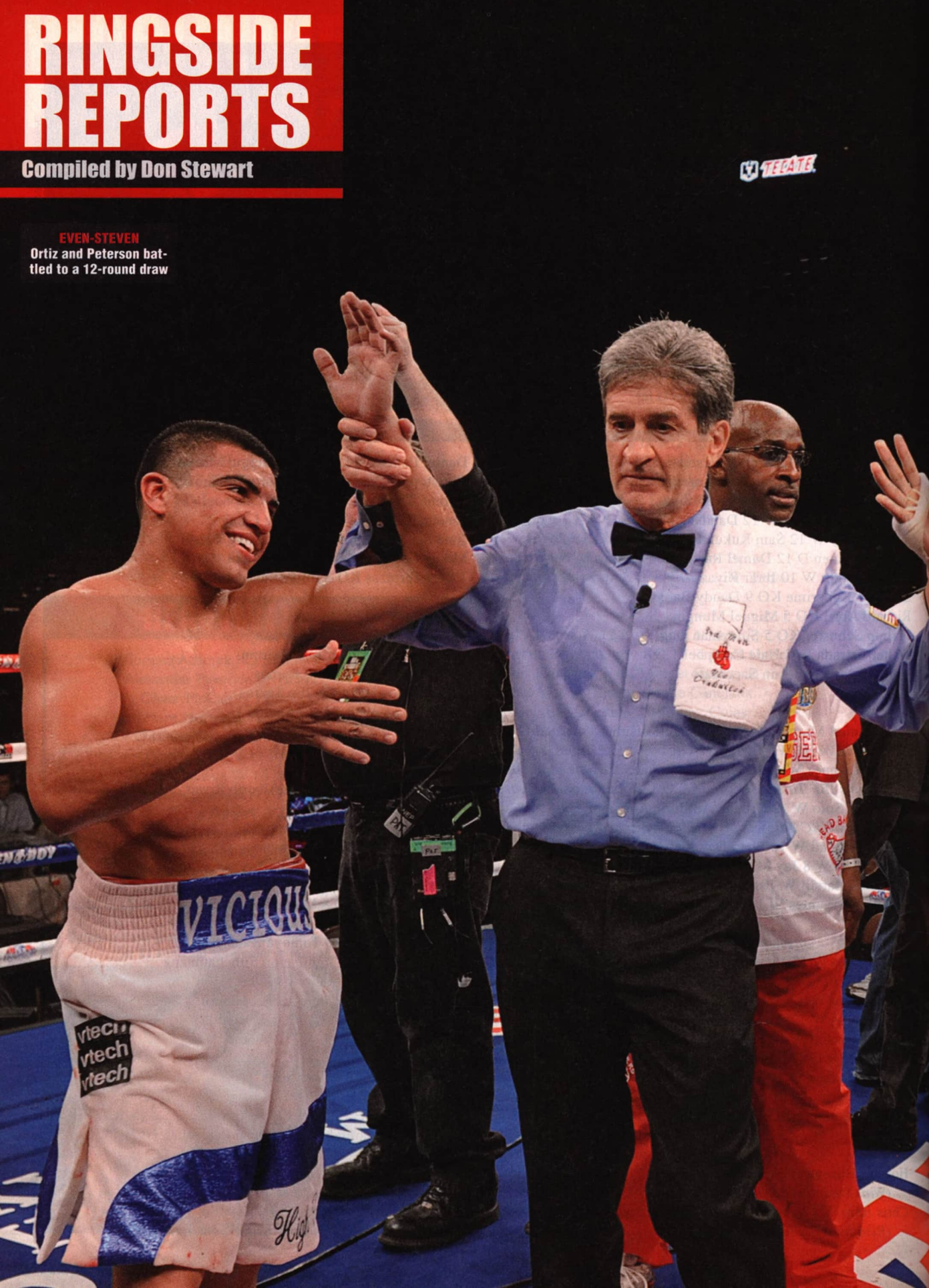
Giovani Segura KO 8 Manuel Vargas
Milan Melindo W 10 Carlos Tamara
Myung Ho Lee W 10 Tomoya Kaneshiro
Rocky Fuentes KO 2 Inthanon Sithchamuang
Juma Fundi W 12 Anthony Mathias
Tepparith Singwancha KO 2 Rino Ukru
Randy Petalcorin KO 2 Allan Doronilla

Junior Flyweights

Luis Lazarte D 12 Ulises Solis
(Retains IBF Title)
Ramon Garcia Hirales W 12 Omar Soto
Xiong Zhao Zhong KO 4 Pongpan Patanakan Gym
Nelson Llanos W 10 Juanito Rubillar
Ivan Meneses W 10 Juan Kantun
Yodmongkol Wor Saengthep W 10 Sofyan Effendi
Lionel Duran W 10 Ruther Del Castillo
Lookdiew Tor Buamas KO 4 Bimbo Nacionales

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Compiled by Don Stewart



EVEN-STEVEN
Ortiz and Peterson battled to a 12-round draw

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Victor Ortiz D 12 Lamont Peterson

Co-headlining the Amir Khan-Marcos Maidana bill at Mandalay Bay, Ortiz was supposed to look good against former title challenger Lamont Peterson and then get a shot at Khan's spoils, if not Khan himself, to prove he's one of the top 140-pounders in the world.

But instead of assuring fight fans that he's ready for a rematch with Maidana, Ortiz kept his blazing guns holstered just long enough to convince three judges that a win was undeserved.

For the first two rounds, spectators yawned while the combatants circled one another. Somehow, with all the inaction, Ortiz suffered a hairline cut at the end of the first that was taken care of between rounds.

In the third, however, Ortiz sprang into action, blasting Peterson with a four-punch combination that put the Washington, D.C., contender on the canvas. Unhurt, Peterson easily beat the count, but Ortiz had him in survival mode for the remainder of the round. With 30 seconds remaining in the third, referee Vic Drakulich ruled a second knockdown when Peterson went flying into the ropes from another attack.

The fight should've been over, but "Vicious" Victor pocketed his moniker while Peterson came out ready to battle his way out of a Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez I type hole. And battle Peterson did, for over the next seven rounds, while Ortiz lightly pressured his foe, the underdog quietly gained composure and confidence.

Countering his Oxnard, California, opponent's occasional advances, Peterson found a home for his left hook and, by the final three rounds, had tamed Ortiz into a cautious, if not reluctant, fighter.

Ortiz' early lead, his 10-7 advantage in the third, and the even middle rounds did not stack up to a win for the heavily hyped southpaw. Though most ringsiders thought Ortiz had pulled off the win, not a single Nevada judge agreed. Two of them, Patricia Morse Jarman and Dave Moretti, scored it even 94-94, while the third, Robert Hoyle, actually had Peterson ahead 95-93.

After losing to Maidana in 2009, Ortiz racked up four impressive wins before drawing with Peterson. "I thought I pulled it off by at least a couple of rounds," Ortiz said at the postfight presser. "The judges must've been asleep or something."

After his loss to Timothy Bradley last year, Peterson bounced back to stop Damian Fuller in April. "I knew the fight was close," Peterson admitted. "I wanted to try to win as many rounds as I could."

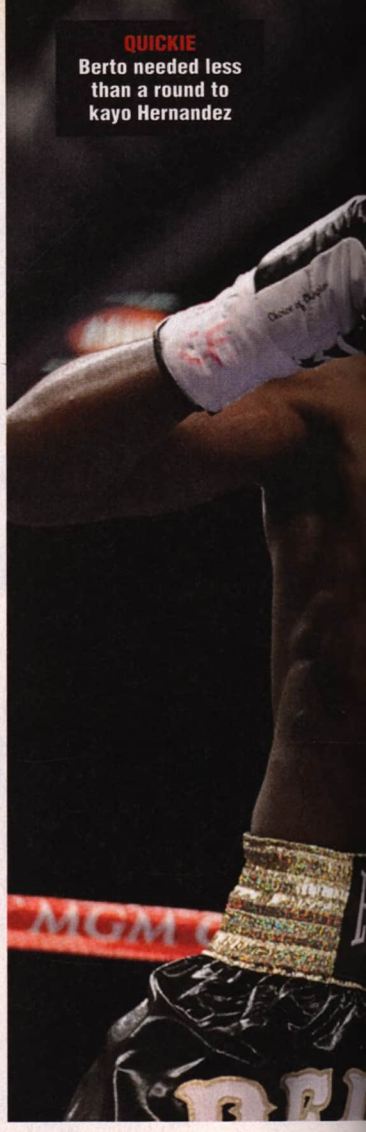
Chris Cozzone

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Welterweight
Location: Las Vegas, NV
Date: December 11, 2010
Television: HBO
Promoter: Golden Boy Promotions
Referee: Vic Drakulich (Nevada)

Victor Ortiz	Lamont Peterson
Age: 23 • **Weight:** 141	**Age:** 26 • **Weight:** 140
Residence: Oxnard, CA	**Residence:** Memphis, TN
Birthplace: Garden City, KS	**Birthplace:** Washington, D.C.
Record: 28-2-2 (22)	**Record:** 28-1-1 (14)
Ring Ranking: 10	**Ring Ranking:** 9

Andre Berto KO 1 Freddy Hernandez


QUICKIE
Berto needed less than a round to kayo Hernandez

Making a case for his long-shot bid in the Manny Pacquiao sweepstakes, Berto needed just a couple of minutes to dispose of overmatched alphabet mandatory challenger Hernandez in the co-main event of the Juan Manual Marquez-Michael Katsidis bill at the MGM Grand.

Mexico City's Hernandez, undefeated in five years and a dozen fights, quietly climbed the sanctioning body rankings by beating past beltholders, journeymen, and smaller opponents. The list includes Mike Anchondo (KO 4), DeMarcus Corley (KO 5), Damian Frias (W 10), Norberto Bravo (W 12), and Ben Tackie (W 10). But against an undefeated speedster like Berto, he was, understandably, a heavy underdog.

No one, however, quite expected the underdog to be put down in one round.

After a slow first two minutes, Berto unleashed a left hook-right combination to the jaw that immediately dropped Hernandez to the canvas. When the challenger stood up on swaying spaghetti legs, referee Russell Mora waved off the fight.

The official time was 2:07.

"I hit him with the jab a couple of times and then came with the right hand over the top," said Berto, who made his fifth successful defense of the WBC belt he won in June 2008.

While Berto's promoter, Lou DiBella, is vying for a shot at Pacquiao, Berto said he just wants big names. "Right now, it doesn't matter," he said. "I already beat all my appetizers. I'm ready for the main course."

It was Hernandez' first defeat since February 2005, when he dropped a 12-round split decision to Golden Johnson. He'd never before been stopped.

Chris Cozzone

MATCH STATS

Division: Welterweight • **Location:** Las Vegas, NV
Date: November 27, 2010 • **Television:** HBO
Promoter: Golden Boy Promotions • **Referee:** Russell Mora (Nevada)

Andre Berto	Freddy Hernandez
Age: 27 • **Weight:** 145	**Age:** 31
Residence: Winter Haven, FL	**Weight:** 147
Birthplace: Miami, FL	**Residence:** Mexico City, Mexico
Record: 27-0 (21)	**Birthplace:** Mexico City, Mexico
Ring Ranking: 3	**Record:** 29-2 (20)

Garth Wood KO 5 Anthony Mundine

You would go a long way to find another boxer who has achieved so much with a simple opportunity. Novice boxer Wood parlayed a last-minute invitation into *The Contender Australia* tournament into a history-making, stunning knockout win over former beltholder Mundine.

"From the Hood" Wood won the television reality show in January 2010, which guaranteed him a fight with Mundine and a $250,000 payday as part of his prize. The scheduled 10-rounder never flowed, and Wood appeared overly cautious in the first two rounds. However, his reluctance to attack actually encouraged Mundine to come forward and trade on the inside, which is not his usual style.

Wood's demeanor appeared to change in round three after he sustained a cut above his left eye from an accidental head clash. Becoming more aggressive, Wood let his hands go frequently and bullied Mundine into the ropes on a number of occasions.

After a number of scrappy exchanges and wrestling clinches, Wood was able to flurry cleanly on the inside in round five. He landed a stinging left hook directly on the jaw of Mundine as part of a four-punch combination, knocking him out cleanly before "The Man" had hit the canvas.

Referee Les Fear counted, but Mundine was unable to move initially as he lay on the

MATCH STATS

Division: Middleweight
Location: Sydney, Australia
Date: December 8, 2010
Promoter: Tony Mundine
Referee: Les Fear (Australia)

Garth Wood	Anthony Mundine
Age: 32 • **Weight:** 161	**Age:** 35 • **Weight:** 160¾
Residence: Sydney, Australia	**Residence:** Sydney, Australia
Birthplace: Sydney, Australia	**Birthplace:** Sydney, Australia
Record: 10-1-1 (6)	**Record:** 40-4 (24)

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

canvas. Upon reaching 10, Mundine stood up gingerly on unsteady legs and was caught and prevented from falling down again by Wood's trainer, Billy Hussein. The time was 58 seconds into the fifth round.

It was a breathtaking sight that had the large crowd in attendance at the ACER Arena gasping at the sudden knockout. "What do I say?" asked Wood in the ring immediately after the win. "I am the best-kept secret, but you are all aware of me now."

Mundine appeared to be unable to comprehend what had just happened when interviewed after the devastating loss. "You get caught," he said. "It's about how you bounce back. I congratulate Garth and his team. More credit to him." The defeat for Mundine was the fourth in his career, after prior title-fight losses to Sven Ottke, Manny Siaca, and Mikkel Kessler.

Wood, like Mundine, a former rugby league football player, made the most of an opportunity and proved that a truckload of confidence and hard work can, on occasion, take somebody a long way forward in boxing, despite the absence of a polished technique.

Paul Upham

PHOTO BY MARK METCALFE/GETTY IMAGES

UPSET DOWN UNDER
Wood flexes after knocking out heavily favored Mundine

Giovani Segura KO 8 Manuel Vargas

Junior flyweight world champion Segura scored his fourth victory of 2010 by beating Vargas bloody and living up to his puncher's reputation. The non-title bout was fought in the flyweight division.

Segura, "The Aztec Warrior," looks to be a legitimate terror at the lighter end of the boxing world. Vargas fought gallantly in the early rounds but was deemed unable to continue after the seventh on the advice of the ringside doctor. Segura has now won six in a row inside the distance.

"Chango" Vargas, whose best days are behind him, was probably little more than a stay-busy opponent for Segura, especially after Segura's career-making stoppage of Ivan Calderon for the title last August. Vargas has been a fringe contender over the years and even wore an "interim" belt for a short time, but he's been struggling of late and suffered a kayo loss to Nonito Donaire earlier in 2010.

When it was learned that promoter Fernando Beltran was staging Segura-Vargas the same night as a Showtime "Super Six" program and an HBO tripleheader, some wondered if Beltran was making a mistake. The bout was the co-headliner along with IBF lightweight titlist Miguel Vazquez defending against Ricardo Dominguez, but, even so, Beltran seemed pretty bold to compete with such heady competition. When you have a slugger such as Segura to showcase, though, it's hard not to gamble that loyal Mexican boxing fans will come and fill the seats.

At first, it looked as if Beltran's risk would pay off, for Vargas and Segura began the bout by slamming each other with hard shots. Segura showed he could take a punch, even at 112 pounds, for Vargas was landing often. Segura was winning the rounds on the judges' scorecards, but he wasn't winning them easily. And Vargas looked anything but shopworn. At times, it even appeared that the brave Vargas was taking Segura out of his game plan.

Just as the fans at Auditorio Municipal in Tijuana believed they were getting a bout as good as anything on the major US cable networks, Segura's heavier hands began taking their toll. Using his longer reach, Segura began dominating with his sweeping hooks and bodyshots. By the seventh round, it was apparent that Vargas' face couldn't take much more punishment. Although Vargas suffered many cuts, it was a particularly bad cut over the left eye that finished him.

Segura was fighting over the 108-pound limit, but he is certainly no stranger to the flyweight division. He fought above 108 for most of his early career before dropping down in 2008 to campaign at junior flyweight. Against Vargas, he showed he could still throw hard stuff at flyweight, which is good news for fans of the lighter divisions and bad news for other flyweights. Should he remain at 108 to defend THE RING championship, bouts with such little warhorses as Brian Viloria, Ulises Solis, Omar Nino, or Rodel Mayol would be mighty interesting. Whether he fights at 108 or tries his luck at 112, Segura is undoubtedly a fighter to watch in 2011.

Meanwhile, Vargas has lost four of his last six, including two stoppage losses.

MATCH STATS

Division: Flyweight • **Location:** Tijuana, Mexico
Date: November 27, 2010 • **Television:** Mexico Azteca, Fox Deportes
Promoter: Promociones Zanfer • **Referee:** Juan Jose Ramirez (Mexico)

Giovani Segura	Manuel Vargas
Age: 28 • **Weight:** 113	**Age:** 29
Residence: Bell Gardens, CA	**Weight:** 112
Birthplace: Altamirano, Mexico	**Residence:** Lagos de Moreno, Mexico
Record: 26-1 (22)	**Birthplace:** Lagos de Moreno, Mexico
RING Ranking: World Champion (Junior Flyweight)	**Record:** 28-7-1 (13)

Tomasz Adam

Maddalone was pegged to do one thing against Adamek—make the Polish-American heavyweight look good in his first bout since his subpar performance against Michael Grant in August. And Adamek looked very good stopping Maddalone in five rounds before 8,218 fans (mostly clad in Polish red) at the Prudential Center—a healthy turnout for a Thursday night.

Adamek controlled the fight from the outset, setting the pace with his quick jab and commitment to the body. The hand speed differential was stark, with Adamek able to get off punches before Maddalone could lunge in for a power shot.

In the second round, Maddalone came out aggressively, landing a few nice shots, the right cross his weapon of choice as he pushed Adamek to the ropes. Still, Adamek clearly won the round, as he was able to land more jabs and bodyshots while on the defensive.

Adamek, the former RING cruiserweight champion, poured it on in round four, rocking Maddalone badly with a furious two-fisted attack. But Maddalone staved him off and landed power shots of

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

ek KO 5 Vinny Maddalone

his own in what was by far the best round of the fight.

Midway through the fifth round, Adamek dropped Maddalone with a three-punch combination. Maddalone bravely beat the count, but Adamek sensed the moment and let his hands go, while Maddalone kept loading up for a "Hail Mary" shot that never came. Referee Steve Smoger, known for being slow to stop fights, gave Maddalone a chance, but "Goral" continued his assault before Maddalone's corner finally waved the towel, halting the fight at the 2:17 mark of round five.

"It's not one-punch power he has. It's the accumulation of punches that he throws. It takes a wear on guys," said Maddalone, who has now been stopped four times in seven losses. "It's a proven case of boxer versus puncher. I was looking for that one punch to land tonight, but he outboxed me in every aspect of the game."

The CompuBox stats were telling. Adamek landed 171 of 384 punches (45 percent), as opposed to 41 of 136 (30 percent) for Maddalone. Adamek also connected on an astounding 58 percent of his power shots (107-of-186).

"I'm quicker than everybody [at heavyweight]," said Adamek, who is 5-0 (2) since moving up to heavyweight. "I feel like a better fighter every time."

Mike Coppinger

MATCH STATS

Division: Heavyweight • **Location:** Newark, NJ • **Date:** December 9, 2010
Television: Pay-Per-View • **Referee:** Steve Smoger (New Jersey)
Promoters: Main Events, Ziggy Promotions, Star Boxing

Tomasz Adamek	Vinny Maddalone
Age: 34 • **Weight:** 216½	**Age:** 36
Residence: Jersey City, NJ	**Weight:** 230
Birthplace: Zywiec, Poland	**Residence:** Queens, NY
Record: 43-1 (28)	**Birthplace:** Queens, NY
RING Ranking: 4	**Record:** 33-7 (24)

OPEN TARGET
Adamek catches face-first Maddalone with a left

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IN HARM'S WAY

Location: Anaheim, CA • **Date:** December 4, 2010
Television: Pay-Per-View • **Promoter:** Top Rank

Miguel Garcia KO 6 Oliver Lontchi

Garcia, the younger brother of trainer and former beltholder Robert Garcia, doesn't look special at first glance. He appears to have solid skills and good power but nothing that makes you say, "Wow!" Except for the results.

The resident of boxing-rich Oxnard, California, did against capable Lontchi what he almost always seems to do—score an impressive knockout. Garcia, a veteran of only 23 bouts at the time of the fight, competed like a seasoned pro. He knew Lontchi, a good athlete, would move his feet constantly to avoid taking punches, so he bided his time. For four-plus rounds, it was a tactical fight, the Cameroon-born Canadian moving and Garcia cutting off the ring. Then, midway through the fifth round, the hunter snared his prey.

Garcia landed a jab-right cross combination that put Lontchi on his pants. Lontchi was able to get up, but Garcia, a good finisher, had him where he wanted him. Garcia unloaded a barrage of punches and Lontchi, unable to defend himself, took a knee and decided that enough was enough. The time was 1:30 of the fifth round of a scheduled 10-rounder. Another fight, another impressive performance.

"I felt strong," Garcia said. "I felt really good the whole fight. I knew the guy was going to move, so I just had to be patient. I was cutting him off, getting close to him every round. When I hit him with the right hand, I knew it was over. It was just a matter of time."

Robert Garcia won a major title belt at 22. Little brother won't be able to duplicate that feat because he turned 23 on December 15. However, if the Lontchi fight is an example of what he's capable of, his time is coming soon.

Michael Rosenthal

MATCH STATS

Division: Featherweight
Referee: Jerry Cantu (California)

Miguel Garcia
Age: 22 • **Weight:** 123¼
Residence: Oxnard, CA
Birthplace: Ventura, CA
Record: 24-0 (20)

Oliver Lontchi
Age: 27 • **Weight:** 125½
Residence: Montreal, Canada
Birthplace: Bemingeo, Cameroon
Record: 18-2-2 (8)

Humberto Soto W 12 Urbano Antillon

Soto's third defense of the WBC lightweight belt was destined to be a memorable battle from the moment it was announced—the matchup pitted a gifted boxer who is willing to exchange (Soto) against a resilient brawler who never stops coming (Antillon). No one among the 3,253 at Honda Center wound up disappointed.

Antillon gave an inspired performance, taking brutal punishment from a superior boxer from beginning to end, but he relentlessly pursuing his foe and inflicting his share of damage. The Los Angeles-based Mexican obviously was in tremendous condition. Afterward, Soto called it "without a doubt my toughest fight."

Still, Soto was able to outbox his limited opponent. He connected with hard, accurate flurries that hurt Antillon on occasion—including a cut above his right eye—and then consistently scooted out of range. The Tijuana resident was forced to engage his foe at many stages of the fight, however. The result was a terrific, fast-paced affair that had the spectators on their feet more than once. No more than a few seconds went by without some form of action as the fighters combined to connect on 646 of 1,551 total punches, according to CompuBox statistics.

In the end, Soto won a razor-thin but unanimous decision: 115-112, 114-113, and 114-113. (THE RING had it 116-111, or eight rounds to four, for Soto.) Had Antillon not lost a point for repeated low blows, which was deducted by referee Ray Corona, the result would've been a majority draw.

Afterward, Soto was asked about a scheduled date with hard-punching Brandon Rios. "Antillon said he wanted a rematch," he said through a translator. "I feel he earned it. If he wants that, I think it's something we can do. Brandon can wait."

Soto probably will go through with the fight against Rios, which is scheduled for February 26 but might have to be pushed back because of the toll his war against Antillon took. Or, who knows, Soto could push for the rematch first. Either way, the fans win.

And don't feel too bad for Antillon if he doesn't get the immediate rematch. Promoter Bob Arum, who handles both men and was impressed with Antillon's performance, told the disappointed fighter in the ring that he would likely face another beltholder and Arum fighter—Miguel Vazquez—for the IBF lightweight strap on the February 26 undercard.

Michael Rosenthal

Nonito Donaire KO 4 Wladimir Sidorenko

On paper, this was a good matchup—a gifted and rising young star versus a proven, still-capable veteran who had never been stopped. In the ring, the good matchup quickly evolved into a slaughter before 3,253 spectators at Honda Center.

Donaire, a big bantamweight even though he was making his debut in the division, appeared to be at least a weight class heavier than Sidorenko. And the Filipino's awesome combination of speed and power rendered the tough Ukrainian helpless. The result was a short but emphatic beating that left Sidorenko a bloody mess and Donaire a more formidable player in the sport.

Donaire put his overwhelmed foe down three times, hurting him increasingly in the process. In the first, he wobbled Sidorenko with a left hook—the first sign of trouble—and then put him down with a left hook-straight right combination. Sidorenko, his face by then crimson red from blood flowing from his nose, went down from another left hook in the third round. And, in the fourth, a vicious left-right combination sent him to a knee, and he declined to get up. The former beltholder was in over his head and he knew it; there was no point in taking further punishment. The official end came at 1:48 of the fourth round of a scheduled 12-round bout.

Afterward, Donaire, ecstatic over his performance, was asked to compare this victory with his signature one-punch knockout of Vic Darchinyan in 2007. "That was just one punch," he said. "This was my best performance as a fighter." Indeed, Donaire looked positively scary against Sidorenko, like a fighter who belongs on top 10 pound-for-pound lists.

NOSE JOB
Soto fires a right hand flush into Antillon's face

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

MATCH STATS

Division: Lightweight • **Referee:** Ray Corona (California)

Humberto Soto	Urbano Antillon
Age: 30 • **Weight:** 134¾	**Age:** 28 • **Weight:** 135
Residence: Tijuana, Mexico	**Residence:** Maywood, CA
Birthplace: Los Mochis, Mexico	**Birthplace:** Namiquipa, Mexico
Record: 54-7-2 (32)	**Record:** 28-2 (20)
Ring Ranking: 2	**Ring Ranking:** 8

MATCH STATS

Division: Bantamweight • **Referee:** Marcos Rosales (California)

Nonito Donaire	Wladimir Sidorenko
Age: 28 • **Weight:** 118	**Age:** 34
Residence: San Leandro, CA	**Weight:** 117½
Birthplace: Talibon, Philippines	**Residence:** Kiev, Ukraine
Record: 25-1 (17)	**Birthplace:** Enerhodar, Ukraine
Ring Ranking: 5	**Record:** 22-3-2 (7)

WIPEOUT!
Donaire decks Sidorenko en route to fourth-round kayo

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

But we'll learn a lot more about Donaire on February 19, when he challenges equally talented 118-pound beltholder Fernando Montiel in a profoundly compelling matchup. If Donaire can repeat his performance of December 4 against the highly respected Mexican, then we'll know we have something truly special. "I'm excited," Donaire said of the opportunity. So are we.

Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. was scheduled to headline this card, first against Alfonso Gomez and then (after Gomez pulled out) against Pawel Wolak, but claimed he couldn't fight as he was suffering from flu-like symptoms.

Michael Rosenthal

Jason Litzau W 10 Celestino Caballero

In the opening telecast of an HBO triple-header at the MGM Grand, Minnesota's Litzau, written off as finished by most, topped off the best year of his career with one of 2010's biggest upsets as he outpointed Caballero, one of the sport's most avoided fighters.

Fighting for the first time at junior lightweight, former 122-pound kingpin Caballero looked sluggish, awkward, and just plain awful against the rejuvenated Litzau, who started the year by defeating Rocky Juarez.

The two traded fairly often in the opening rounds, with Litzau lighter on his feet as Caballero plodded forward. Increasing his aggression, Caballero surged slightly ahead in the third and fourth by landing the harder shots.

But Litzau countered successfully in the fifth, hurting the Panamanian. Turning aggressor, he went after Caballero in the sixth.

Neither fighter asserted control in the seventh and the eighth was a toss-up. In the ninth, Caballero, somewhat desperate, forced Litzau into slugging. Then, in the final frame, Caballero sagged while "The American Boy" finished the fight in better form.

The three Nevada judges were split. Al Lefkowitz scored it for Caballero, 96-94, but was overruled by Glenn Trowbridge and Dave Moretti, who gave the fight to Litzau, 97-93 and 96-94, respectively.

"I was feeling too heavy and couldn't move my feet," Caballero said. "Litzau was using illegal punches to measure me, and that caused a problem. All Litzau did was run, and I won the fight."

It was Caballero's first loss in six years and 16 bouts. The former unified beltholder now might have a harder time landing a mega-fight against the likes of Yuriorkis Gamboa or Juan Manuel Lopez. On the other hand, it might prove even easier should one of the big names watch his performance against Litzau, though any potential matchup involving Caballero has lost some of its previous luster. Meanwhile, with the biggest win of his career, Litzau raises his stock in the 130-pound division.

"The great white hype is here!" said an ecstatic Litzau.

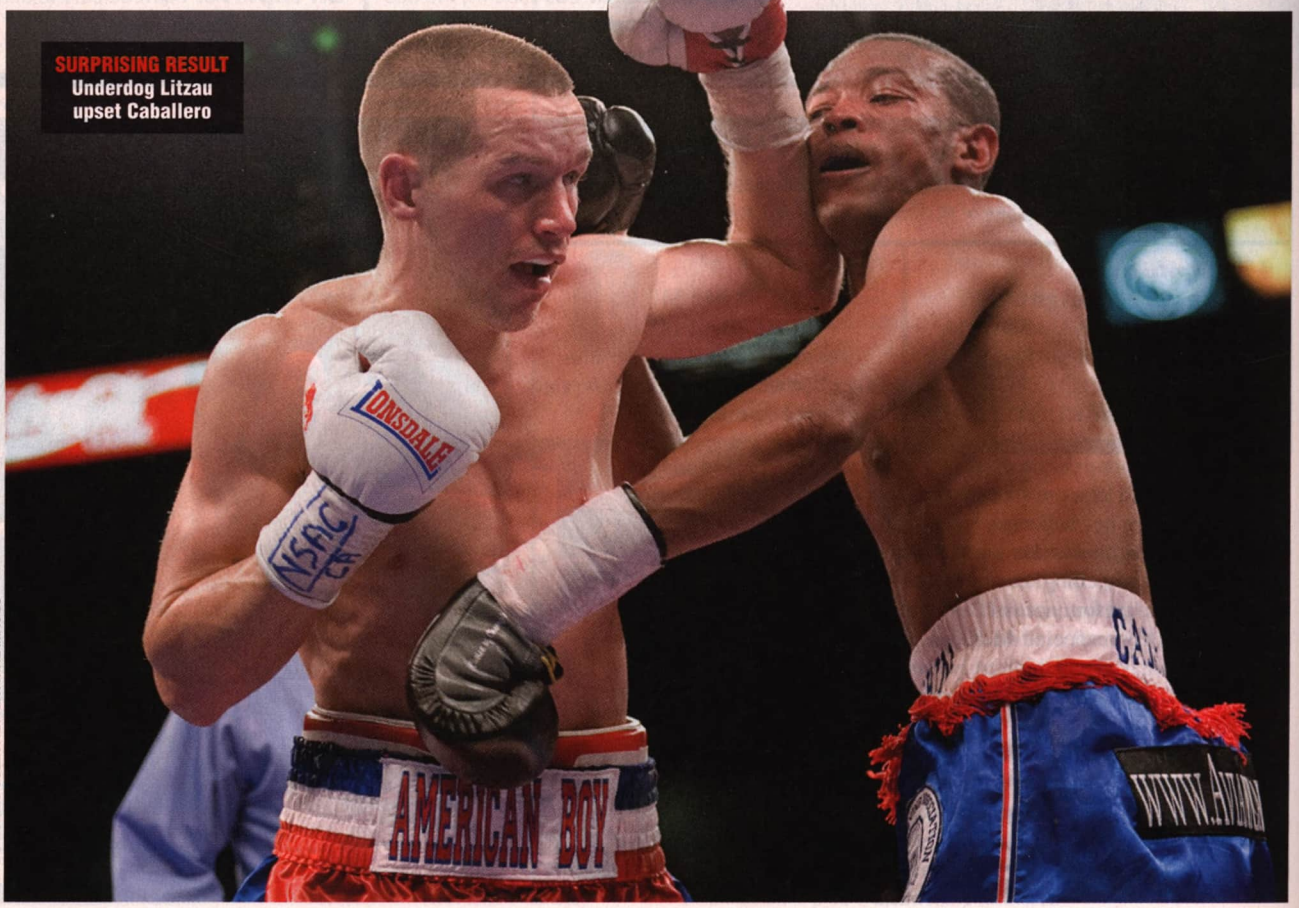
Chris Cozzone

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Lightweight
Location: Las Vegas, NV
Date: November 27, 2010
Television: HBO
Promoter: Golden Boy Promotions
Referee: Joe Cortez (Nevada)

Jason Litzau
Age: 27
Weight: 130
Residence: St. Paul, Minnesota
Birthplace: St. Paul, Minnesota
Record: 28-2 (21)
Ring Ranking: 10

Celestino Caballero
Age: 34
Weight: 130
Residence: Panama City, Panama
Birthplace: Colon, Panama
Record: 34-3 (23)



SURPRISING RESULT
Underdog Litzau upset Caballero

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

ON THE ATTACK
Southpaw Ao forces Tajbert against the ropes

PHOTO BY SANEI/GETTY IMAGES

Takahiro Ao W 12 Vitali Tajbert

Japanese southpaw Ao impressively captured the WBC junior lightweight belt as he dropped defending champ Tajbert with a smashing straight left in the third round and controlled the proceedings with his constant aggressiveness to win a unanimous decision over 12 fast-paced rounds on the Hozumi Hasegawa-Juan Carlos Burgos undercard at Nihon Gaishi Hall.

It was Tajbert's second defense of a belt he picked up after Humberto Soto vacated it in March 2010. For Ao, it was a second coronation following a brief reign in the featherweight division.

The bout represented Ao's career-best performance. With his vaunted left hooks, Ao maintained the initiative all the way against Tajbert's occasional retaliation. Tajbert, a bronze medalist for Germany at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, proved to be a sound technical fighter with fine defensive ability based on fast footwork and flexible body movement. But the tide couldn't be turned after his third round visit to the deck as Ao aimed exclusively at the breadbasket, a strategy that turned out to be effective enough to have the Tajbert slowing down as the contest progressed.

After the fourth round, the WBC's open scoring system indicated tallies of 38-37, 39-36, and 39-35, all in favor of the underdog Ao. Tajbert sustained a gash over his left eyebrow in the sixth and another near the first cut in the eighth. Referee Bruce McTavish had the lacerations examined by the ring physician, who allowed the fight to continue.

The scores after the eighth were as follows: 78-74, 77-74 and 78-72, all for the aggressive southpaw Ao. The German Tajbert displayed his resilience in the last four sessions but was unable to overcome his early deficit on points.

The final tallies all favored Ao, who briefly held the WBC featherweight belt in 2009 before being outpointed by Elio Rojas. Jae-Bong Kim (South Korea) scored it 117-112, Noppharat Sricharoen (Thailand) saw it 116-112, and Duane Ford (USA) had it 115-112. Ao cried for joy after he was declared the new titlist.

Joe Koizumi

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Lightweight
Location: Nagoya, Japan
Date: November 26, 2010
Promoter: Teiken Promotions
Referee: Bruce McTavish (New Zealand)

Takahiro Ao
Age: 26
Weight: 130
Residence: Tokyo, Japan
Birthplace: Ichihara, Japan
Record: 20-2-1 (9)
Ring Ranking: 8

Vitali Tajbert
Age: 28
Weight: 129½
Residence: Stuttgart, Germany
Birthplace: Mikhailovka, Kazakhstan
Record: 20-2 (6)

Tavoris Cloud W 12 Fulgencio Zuniga

Zuniga withstood the storm brought by "Thunder" Cloud, who didn't quite have enough thunder to finish off the Columbian veteran in a stay-busy defense at American Airlines Arena. Cloud, who captured a unanimous decision in his second defense of the IBF light heavyweight strap, went the distance for the third straight fight.

He had his chances to end it early as he scored two knockdowns, but Zuniga was game throughout. The converted southpaw found a home for his left hand, scoring frequently with uppercuts and hard jabs. Zuniga also had Cloud bleeding from a cut over his left eye, which was caused by a headbutt in the fifth round.

"Zuniga was a tough guy," Cloud said. "I knew I had better skills but he came into this fight in good shape. I only give my performance a 'B' tonight. I will tell you I took this man seriously because I knew he would come to fight."

Zuniga, who previously challenged for belts at 154 and 168 pounds, moved up to 175 for the first time. He was stopped in four rounds by Lucian Bute in a March 2009 bid for a super middleweight belt, and in nine by Kelly Pavlik in an October 2005 middleweight bout. In just his 22nd pro fight, Cloud doesn't appear to be at the level of those two stars. At least not yet.

Cloud went right after Zuniga from the opening round, landing right hands to the head behind a double jab. In the second, Zuniga appeared to be establishing a jab, which he landed effectively to the head and body, but Cloud stole the round with a left uppercut and left hook to the body in the final seconds.

Cloud, who landed the cleaner and harder power shots throughout and closed each round with a flurry, was momentarily stunned by a left hook late in the fourth. He came back to drop Zuniga in the final minute of the fifth with a right to the head, then nearly finished the fight with a follow-up salvo that Zuniga barely survived.

Zuniga regained his legs by the start of the sixth, and answered Cloud with stiff jabs and combinations upstairs in the sixth and seventh as Cloud took a breather. Cloud came back with a series of power shots in the final minute of the eighth to take the round.

Cloud continued landing the more telling shots down the stretch. He finally put a weary Zuniga down again with a combination in the final minute. Zuniga barely beat the count, then unexpectedly brawled effectively at close range with Cloud until the final bell.

Florida judges Peter Trematerra and Michael Pernick each had it 117-109, while Nelson Vazquez (Puerto Rico) scored it 118-108, all for Cloud, who called out Jean Pascal, Bernard Hopkins, and Chad Dawson afterward.

MATCH STATS

Division: Light heavyweight
Location: Miami, FL
Date: December 17, 2010
Promoter: Don King Productions
Referee: Telis Assimenio (USA)

Tavoris Cloud	Fulgencio Zuniga
Age: 28	**Age:** 33
Weight: 175	**Weight:** 174
Residence: Tallahassee, FL	**Residence:** Barranquilla, Colombia
Birthplace: Tallahassee, FL	**Birthplace:** Padilla, Colombia
Record: 22-0 (18)	**Record:** 24-5-1 (21)
Ring Ranking: 2	

PHOTO BY JIJI PRESS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Hozumi Hase

Former bantamweight titlist Hasegawa acquired the vacant WBC featherweight belt as he jumped up two divisions and defeated the previously unbeaten Burgos by unanimous decision over 12 hard-fought rounds at Nihon Gaishi Hall.

Hasegawa overcame some tough moments and remained aggressive, steadily piling up points as he showed his superiority in ring experience and counter-punching. Burgos, however, finely displayed his talent, heart, and gameness against the Japanese hero.

It proved to be a crowd-pleasing, seesaw affair that kept the crowd on its feet. For Hasegawa, it wasn't as easy as the final official tallies indicated, as Burgos was a much better and more dangerous opponent than many had anticipated. Though Burgos fought a southpaw rival for the first time in his professional career, he fought as if he had exchanged punches with lefty opponents on many occasions and knew how to cope with southpaw opposition.

The speedy Hasegawa, who made 10 defenses of his WBC bantamweight belt before Fernando Montiel

BACK ON TOP
Former bantam beltholder Hasegawa beats Burgos for featherweight strap

MATCH STATS

Division: Featherweight
Location: Nagoya, Japan
Date: November 26, 2010
Promoter: Teiken Promotions
Referee: Robert Ramirez Jr. (Puerto Rico)

Hozumi Hasegawa
Age: 29 • **Weight:** 125¾
Residence: Kobe, Japan
Birthplace: Nishiwaki, Japan
Record: 29-3 (12)
Ring Ranking: 10

Juan Carlos Burgos
Age: 22 • **Weight:** 125¾
Residence: Tijuana, Mexico
Birthplace: Tijuana, Mexico
Record: 25-1 (18)

gawa W 12 Juan Carlos Burgos

stopped him in four rounds last April, was in command in at least three out of the first four sessions. He connected with southpaw right hooks following solid straight lefts and turned very aggressive in the fourth to convincingly take the initiative. The open scoring system then showed that Hasegawa was leading on points, 39-37 (twice) and 40-36 through four rounds.

The seventh saw Burgos suddenly turn loose and catch Hasegawa with a looping left uppercut to the chin that had Hasegawa staggering in the center of the ring. Hasegawa fought desperately with his back to the ropes, but it was obviously a round for Burgos, two inches taller and a harder puncher than Hasegawa. For the first time in the fight, the audience as well as Hasegawa's corner realized the potential of the Mexican youngster's strength and power punching. The Japanese was suddenly on the brink of possible defeat.

In round eight, however, Hasegawa displayed another piece of his technical ability in averting his rival's punches with his busy footwork and agile body movement. A cut was then opened on Hasegawa's right eyebrow with an accidental headbutt, so Burgos was penalized a point because of the WBC's eye-cut rule.

The tallies after the eighth were announced as 78-73 (twice) and 77-74, all in Hasegawa's favor. But Hasegawa wasn't taking anything for granted, as Burgos was still dangerous enough to cause an upset in the last four sessions. Hasegawa simply intended to box with a strategy of maintaining his lead on points in the last four rounds. But Burgos refused to yield the initiative to Hasegawa and tried to battle back and bring the belt to Mexico.

The last four rounds became more furious and fierce than earlier sessions as the two engaged in several fierce exchanges without showing any signs of fatigue. The Mexican's right eye was swollen badly, thanks to his repeated absorption of Hasegawa's straight lefts. Still, Hasegawa was overpowered in the last two rounds by Burgos, whose punches were less than accurate due to Hasegawa's excellent footwork and elusive mobility.

Judges Duane Ford (USA) and Joel Scobie (Canada) scored it 117-110, while Hubert Minn (USA) had it 116-111, all for Hasegawa. "I'm happy to dedicate this WBC belt to my mother who passed away two months ago," Hasegawa said. "It wasn't my best performance, but God might have provided this victory thanks to my dedication."

Next up for Hasegawa, most likely, will be a mandatory defense against Mexican extitlist Jhonny Gonzalez. The bout was ordered by the WBC at the organization's recent convention.

Joe Koizumi

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Dec. 2007: Calzaghe-Kessler, Hatton-Mayweather—Britain Puts Its Best Fists Forward. **Also Inside:** Erik Morales, Vazquez-Marquez, Nick Katsidis, Joey Gamache, *The Contender,* welterweights, hometown fighters.

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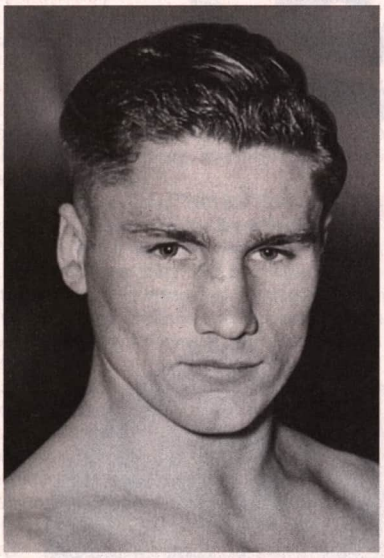
Paddy DeMarco
C.R. Schaare

COVER STORY: The illustration of newly minted lightweight champion Paddy DeMarco actually refers to an article titled **"Italians Stand Out In Boxing History"** by Al Buck, which spins off DeMarco's recent success to also write about other fighters of Italian heritage such as Rocky Kansas, Tony Canzoneri, Lou Ambers, and Sammy Mandell.

Of DeMarco, Buck writes: "The story of DeMarco's rise to the top rung of the ladder is strangely reminiscent of the rise of the Cinderella Man, James J. Braddock, to the heavyweight crown. He had suffered the same frustration, and often, like Braddock, was on the verge of tossing in the towel so that he could obtain the kind of work that would enable him to earn a fair living. But he possessed perseverance, grit, and an abundance of courage—three assets that go to make a winning fighter. The goal of his ambition was to win the world title, and he succeeded in gaining that goal when he defeated [Jimmy] Carter."



EMPIRE CHAMPION
Don Cockell as he looked at the time of the LaStarza fight

Unfortunately, DeMarco was also like Braddock in that he lost the title in his first defense, when Carter regained the title with a 15th-round knockout.

"News Of The British Isles" by Johnny Sharpe highlights British Empire titleholder Don Cockell's controversial decision over Roland LaStarza in front of a near capacity crowd of more than 18,000.

WORLD CHAMPIONS

For the period ended April 20, 1954

Heavyweight	**Lightweight**
Rocky Marciano	Paddy DeMarco
Light Heavyweight	**Featherweight**
Archie Moore	Sandy Saddler
Middleweight	**Bantamweight**
Carol Olson	Jimmy Carruthers
Welterweight	**Flyweight**
Kid Gavilan	Yoshio Shirai

"Referee Henderson rendered the verdict that had Jimmy DeAngelo, manager of LaStarza, and Roland in a rage as they protested bitterly to both the official and the president of the British Boxing Board of Control," writes Sharpe.

"It's my own fault," said LaStarza. "I should have knocked him out. I started too late. But I'm positive I won the fight."

"Olson Gains Stature" by Nat Fleischer came in the wake of Bobo's split decision over welterweight champion Kid Gavilan in front of 18,352 at Chicago Stadium.

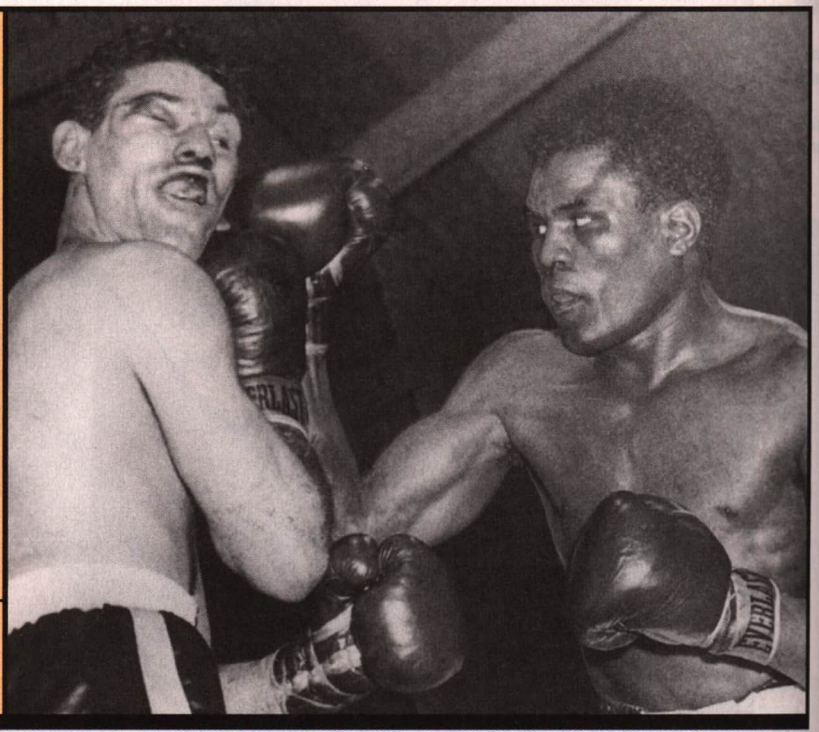
"The joust between Olson and Gavilan followed a set pattern," writes Fleischer. "[Olson] had decided to carry the fight to his challenger and Gavilan had planned to overcome the advantages of the defending champion through speed and agility. Unfortunately for the Cuban, he failed to take into consideration his added weight—a problem he couldn't overcome."

Gavilan's problems didn't stop there. He lost the welterweight championship to Johnny Saxton in his next fight. ■

"Hurricane Blows Toward Crown" by Nat Loubet hypes Tommy "Hurricane" Jackson as a possible challenger for heavyweight champion Rocky Marciano, following Jackson's sixth-round TKO of Dan Bucceroni.

"From the beginning, it was obvious to all that Bucceroni had but one chance. That he must fight from the outside, using long lefts and waiting for the openings to use his right cross," writes Loubet. "But The Hurricane was like a tornado. He possessed no style, no boxing ability, but he rained blows at such a clip, absorbed everything thrown at him so well, and was so tireless the Philadelphian never had a chance."

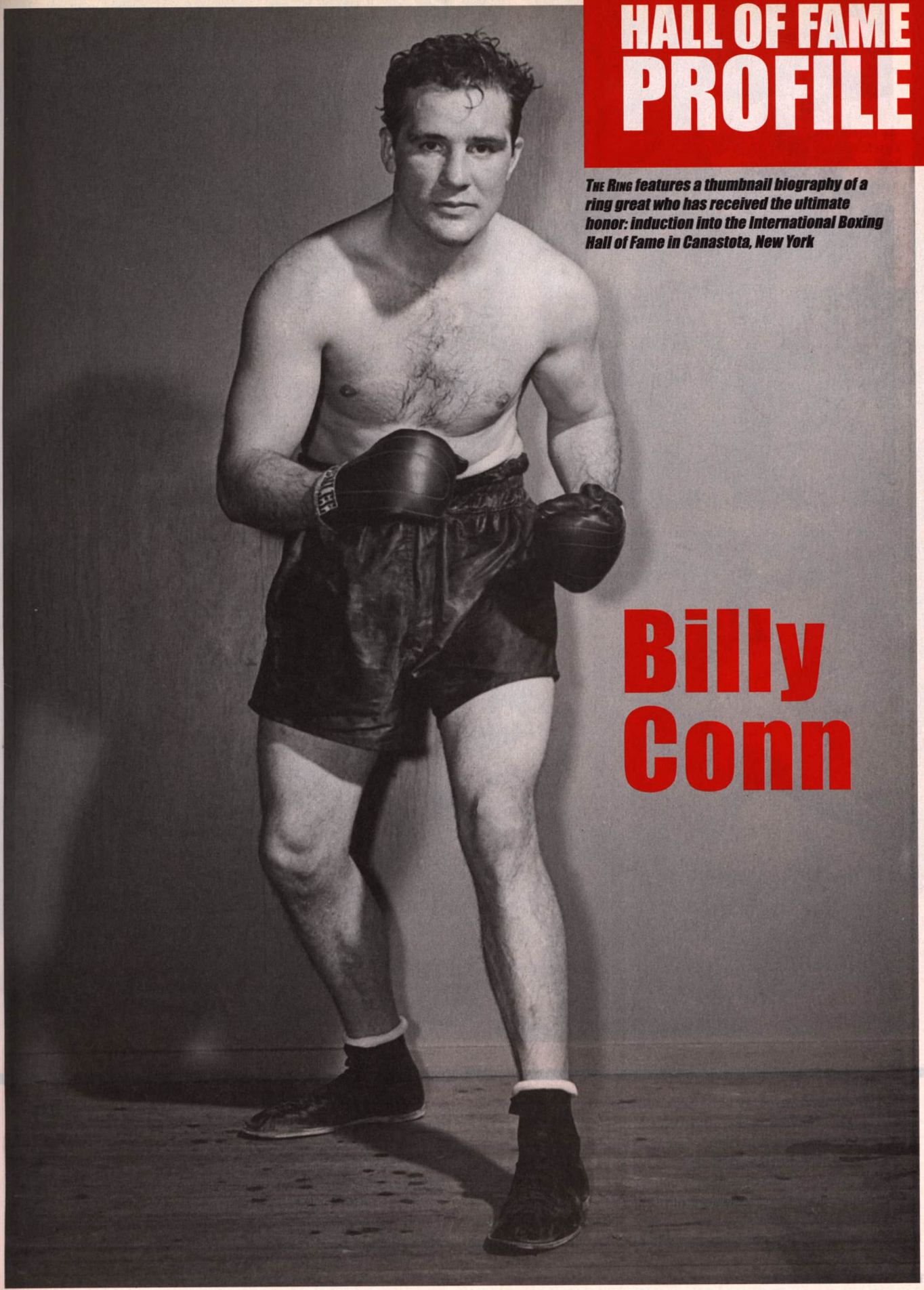
Jackson never did get that shot at Marciano, but he did challenge Floyd Patterson for the heavyweight title in 1957, losing via 10th-round TKO.



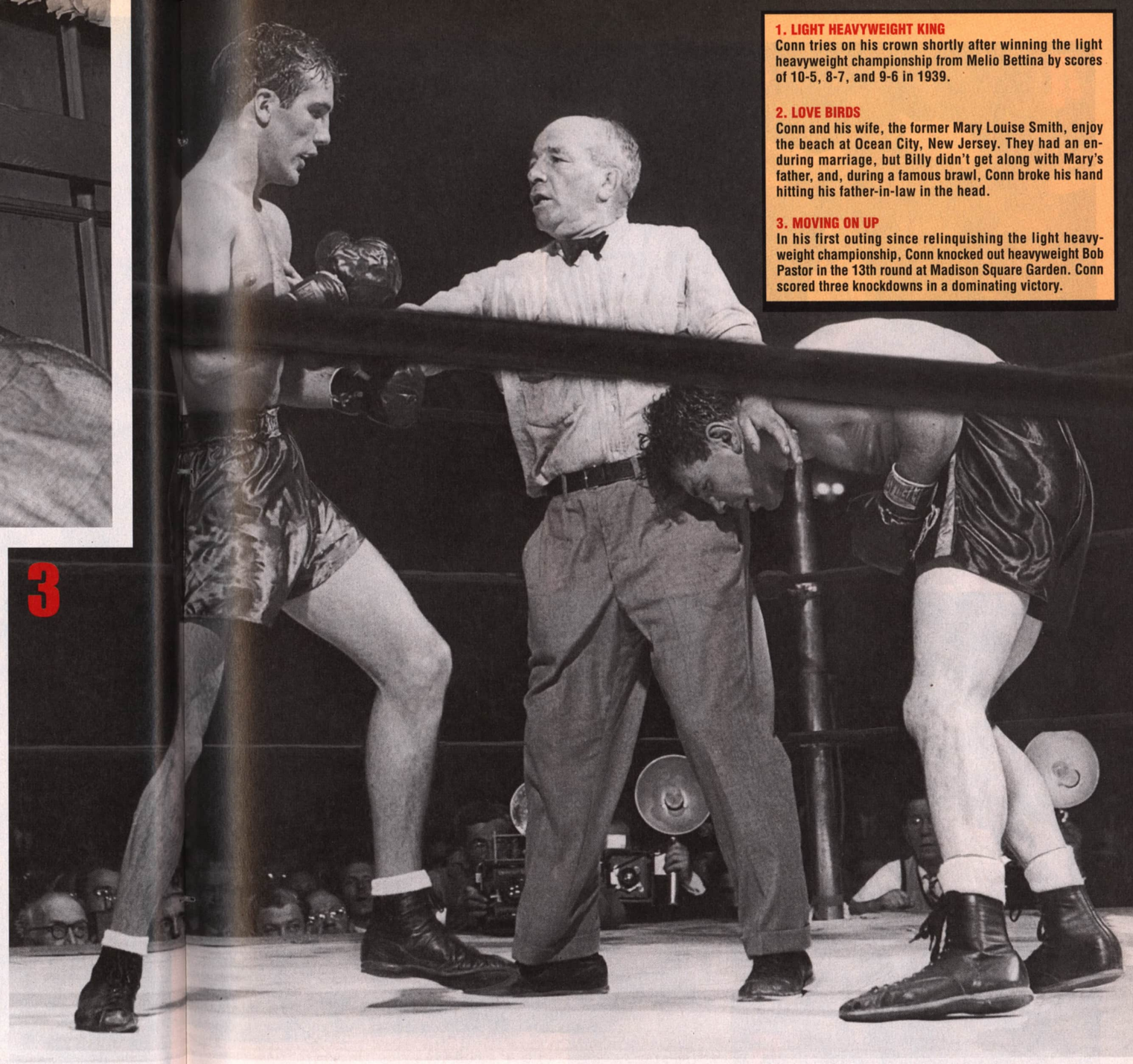
HURRICANE FORCE
Tommy "Hurricane" Jackson lashes out at the battered face of Dan Bucceroni en route to a sixth-round TKO victory.

HALL OF FAME PROFILE

The Ring features a thumbnail biography of a ring great who has received the ultimate honor: induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York



Billy Conn



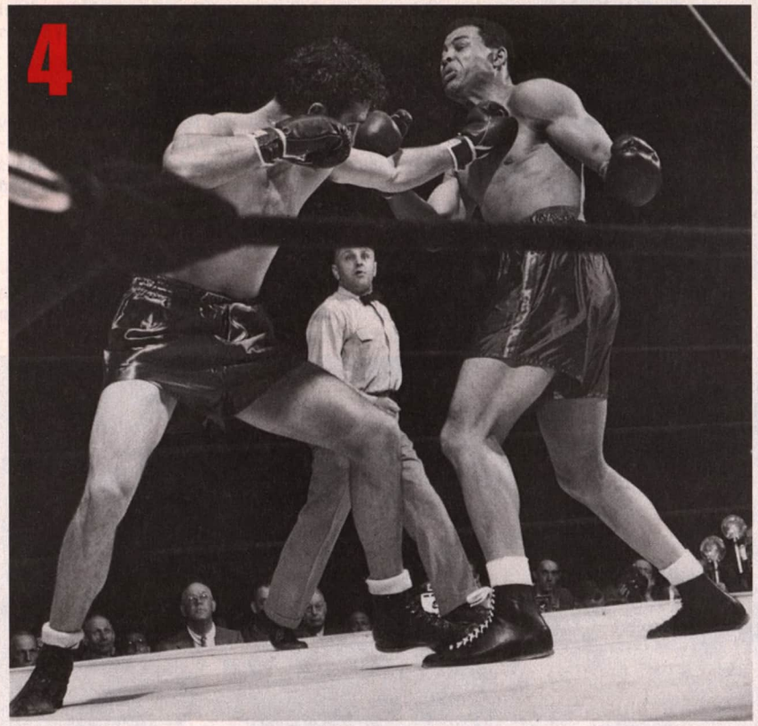
1. LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT KING
Conn tries on his crown shortly after winning the light heavyweight championship from Melio Bettina by scores of 10-5, 8-7, and 9-6 in 1939.

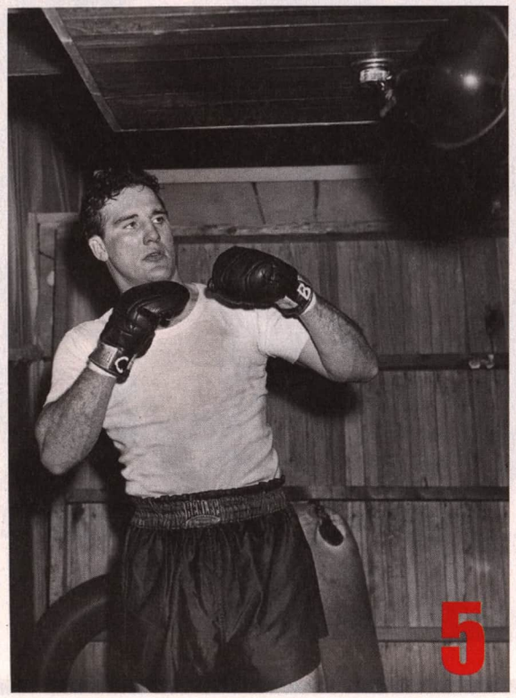
2. LOVE BIRDS
Conn and his wife, the former Mary Louise Smith, enjoy the beach at Ocean City, New Jersey. They had an enduring marriage, but Billy didn't get along with Mary's father, and, during a famous brawl, Conn broke his hand hitting his father-in-law in the head.

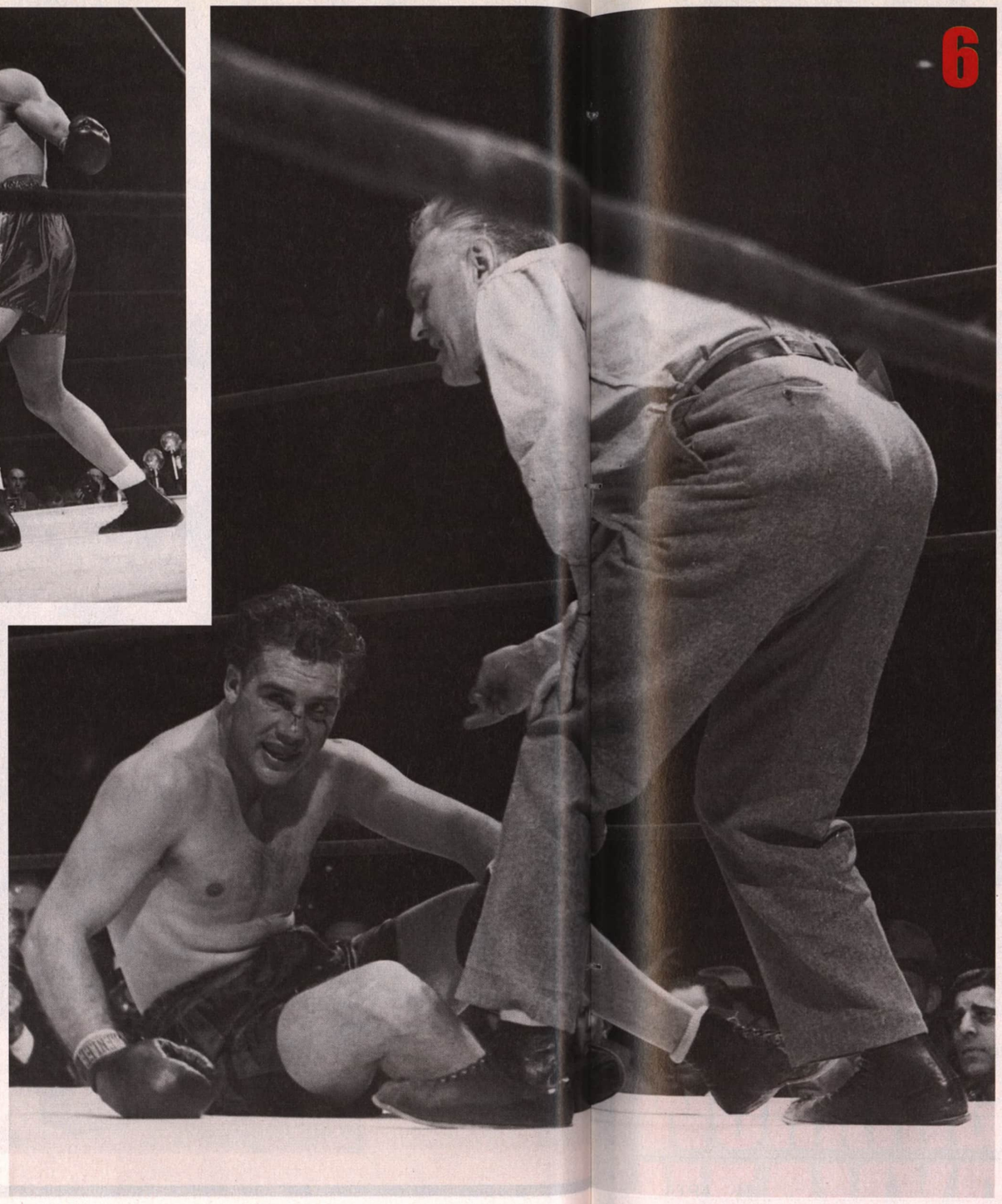
3. MOVING ON UP
In his first outing since relinquishing the light heavyweight championship, Conn knocked out heavyweight Bob Pastor in the 13th round at Madison Square Garden. Conn scored three knockdowns in a dominating victory.

Birthdate: October 8, 1917
Birthplace: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Date of Death: May 29, 1993
Nickname: The Pittsburgh Kid
Weight Classes: Middleweight, Light Heavyweight, Heavyweight
Record: 63-12-1 (15)
Title Held: World Light Heavyweight

Best Performances: Melio Bettina (W 15, W 15), Gus Lesnevich (W 15), Bob Pastor (KO 13), Lee Savold (W 12), Fritzie Zivic (W 10), Teddy Yarosz (W 12), Solly Krieger (W 12, W 12), Fred Apostoli (W 12, W 15), Gunnar Barlund (KO 8), Gus Dorazio (KO 8), Joe Louis (KO by 13)
Year of IBHOF Induction: 1990
Background: Grew up idolizing Harry Greb and fighting other kids in the alleys of Pittsburgh's East Liberty neighborhood … Started training at a young age under the guidance of Johnny Ray … Turned pro in June 1934, at age 16, without the benefit of an amateur career, losing a four-round decision to Dick Woodward … Lost almost as frequently as he won the first couple of years but began a 28-bout unbeaten streak in September 1935 that included a 10-round decision over future welterweight champion Fritzie Zivic and victories over Teddy Yarosz and Vince Dundee … Young Corbett III ended the streak via 10-round decision in August '37, but Conn won the rematch three months later … Made his Madison Square Garden debut in January '39, beating Fred Apostoli in 10 rounds, and then did it again in February … By then, "The Pittsburgh Kid" was hot property, and, following a 12-round decision over Solly Krieger, he decisioned Melino Bettina over 15 rounds to win the light heavyweight championship in front of 15,295 fans at MSG … Successfully defended the title three times and then moved up to heavyweight to try to get a crack at





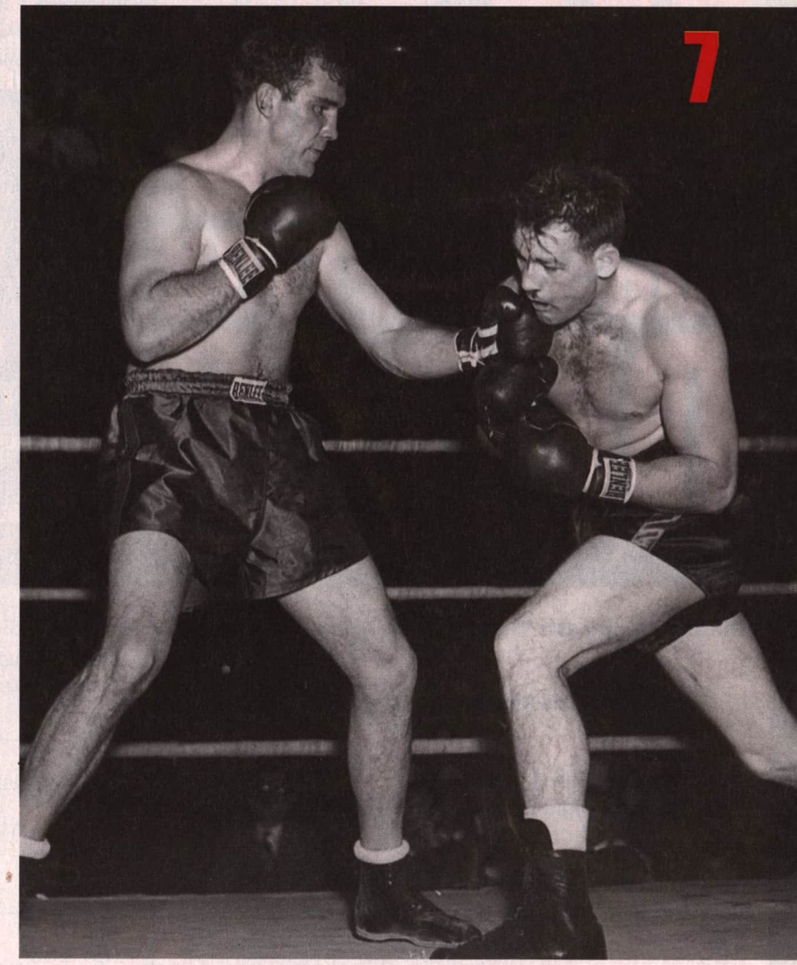


4. SO CLOSE AND YET SO FAR
Conn used his speed and boxing skills so well in his first fight with Joe Louis, he was ahead on points going into the 13th round. Then Conn abandoned the fight plan and tried to kayo "The Brown Bomber." The change of strategy backfired, and Louis knocked him out.

5. IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED ...
Conn was back in training for a rematch with Louis following the end of World War II, during which Conn, like Louis, served in the US Army.

6. BLOWN AWAY
Conn was no longer the same fighter after the four-year gap between the first and second Louis fights. Louis had no trouble handling him, and referee Eddie Josephs counted out a bloody Billy in the eighth round.

7. LAST DANCE
Conn fought twice after the second Louis loss, and, in his final bout, Conn knocked out journeyman Jackie Lyons in the eighth round of a fight held in Dallas, Texas, on November 25, 1948.



heavyweight champ Joe Louis ... Knocked out Bob Pastor with a left hook to the body in his first bout after giving up the 175-round title ... Six more heavyweight wins (four by kayo) and he was deemed ready for Louis ... They fought at the Polo Grounds on June 18, 1942, in front of 54,486 fans, including a contingent of 6,000 from Pittsburgh. Conn boxed brilliantly and was ahead on two of the three scorecards entering the 13th round. Then he made a fatal mistake by abandoning his boxing style and going for the knockout ... Two of Louis' right-hand bombs ended the fight at the 2:58 mark ... Family problems and a broken hand delayed the rematch until after World War II, most of which Conn served in the US Army ... His second shot at Louis (the first televised heavyweight championship) finally came on June 18, 1946, before which Louis famously said, "He can run, but he can't hide" ... Louis was correct, and Conn, who was no longer the same fighter he was four years prior, was knocked out in the 8th round, a dismal performance that earned him the Associated Press' annual "Flop Of The Year" award ... Conn won two more fights, both in '48, and then retired ... He remained a popular figure for the rest of his life, and in 1990 (three years before his death) he stopped a robbery at a convenience store by scuffling with the robber ... "I think I interrupted his plans," said Conn ... He was THE RING's 1940 Fighter of the Year and played himself in 1941 movie called *The Pittsburgh Kid*. ■

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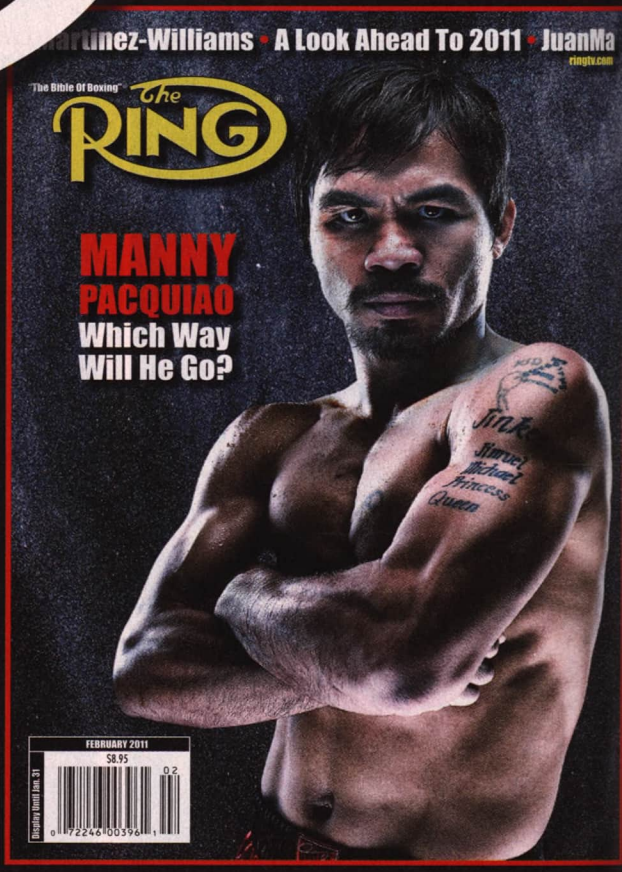

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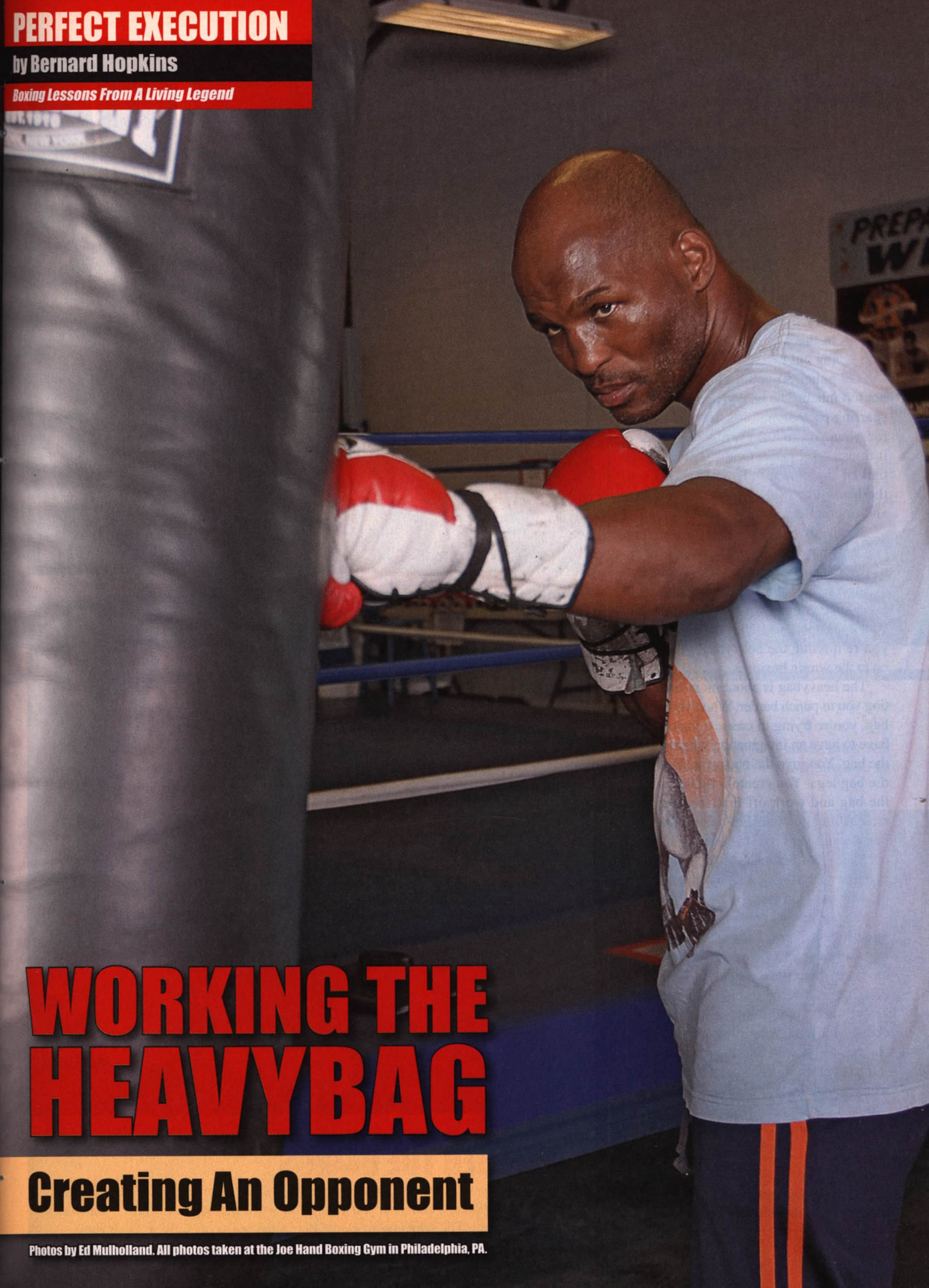


WORKING THE HEAVYBAG

Creating An Opponent

Photos by Ed Mulholland. All photos taken at the Joe Hand Boxing Gym in Philadelphia, PA.

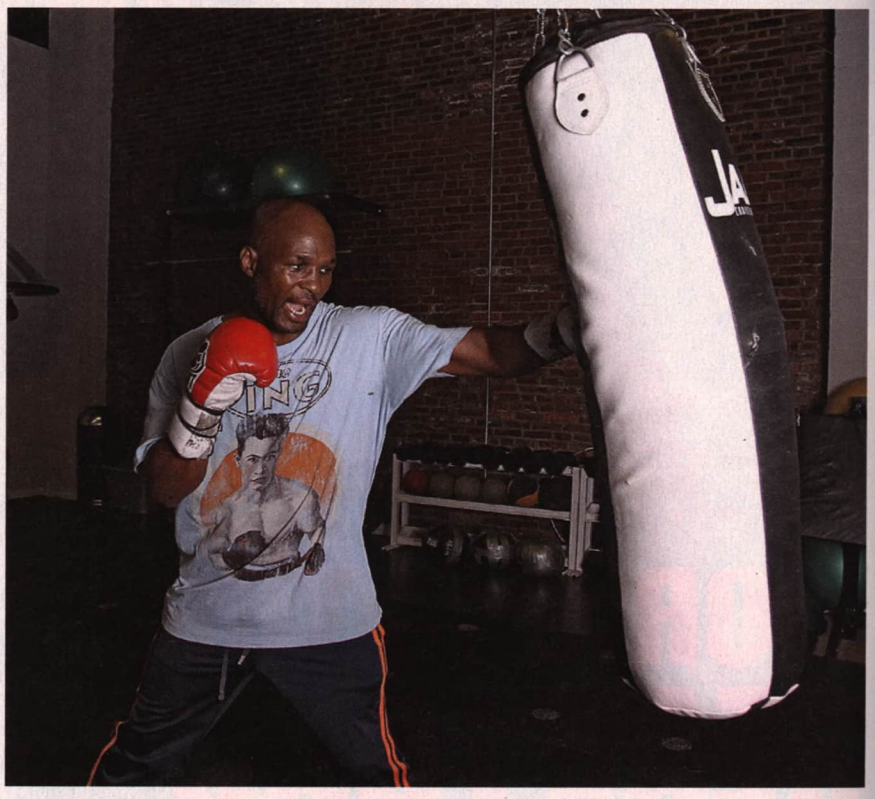
Every fighter uses the heavybag in the gym. When you're starting out that's where you learn to punch something that gives, but not too much. The heavybag is your first sparring partner, and it's the perfect one for when you're just starting out because it doesn't hit back. Getting hit back is part of the game, but, when you work the heavybag, you're doing it to learn and to practice.

The heavybag is great for increasing punching power too because, when you hit it, you're using the same muscles you use during a fight, but the bag gives resistance every time you hit it. As long as you keep your eyes open, you'll hit it every time. If you're missing the heavybag, you might be in the wrong business.

The heavybag is about more than getting you to punch harder. When you hit the bag, you're trying to create a vision. You have to have an imagination when you hit the bag. You give the bag arms. You give the bag legs. You create a fighter within the bag and work off that. You have to have an imagination and endurance. The bag doesn't get tired; the bag doesn't say ouch. You have to make the bag say ouch, to make the bag sing. The bag must holler the way bags holler.

When I'm hitting the heavybag, I imagine it being my opponent, or I'm thinking about what I'm working on to use in the fight—a move or punch or combination. It's a practice bag. My opponent has arms, skills, and a beltline. The bag doesn't have any of those things. So the bag has to become that in so many ways so I can get what I need to out of it. It ain't what the bag is; it's what I make the bag. Danny Davis and I show here's how to make it work for you.

BERNARD HOPKINS
Is the former middleweight and light heavyweight champion of the world.

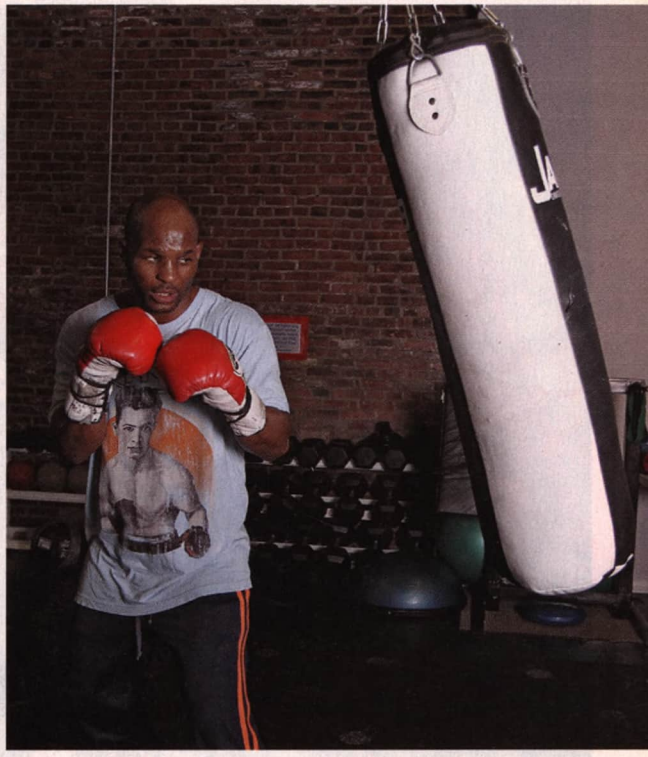


REMEMBER THE BASICS

Hands up, chin down, eyes straight ahead, on balance at all times. Remember, it's not just a bag; it's an opponent, and your job when you work the bag is to treat it the way you would an opponent. The way you work the bag is the way you'll fight. Do it right.

MAKE THAT BAG SAIL

Your opponent isn't going to stand in front of you in one spot all night, and you're not going to stand in front of him either. So make that bag move around like your opponent will, and, when it swings back at you, hit it and get out of the way, or get out of the way and then hit it. Move. Work your legs like you would in a fight. This isn't target practice. It's fight practice.



THE WRONG WAY

Sure, you can stand in front of the bag flat-footed with your hands down and your chin up and just punch away at it, and nothing will happen. But if you do it that way in the gym you'll do it that way in a fight, and then you're in trouble. No trainer worth anything will let you get away with hitting a bag like this and, if he does, it's time to find a new trainer.

WORK THE POWER PUNCHES

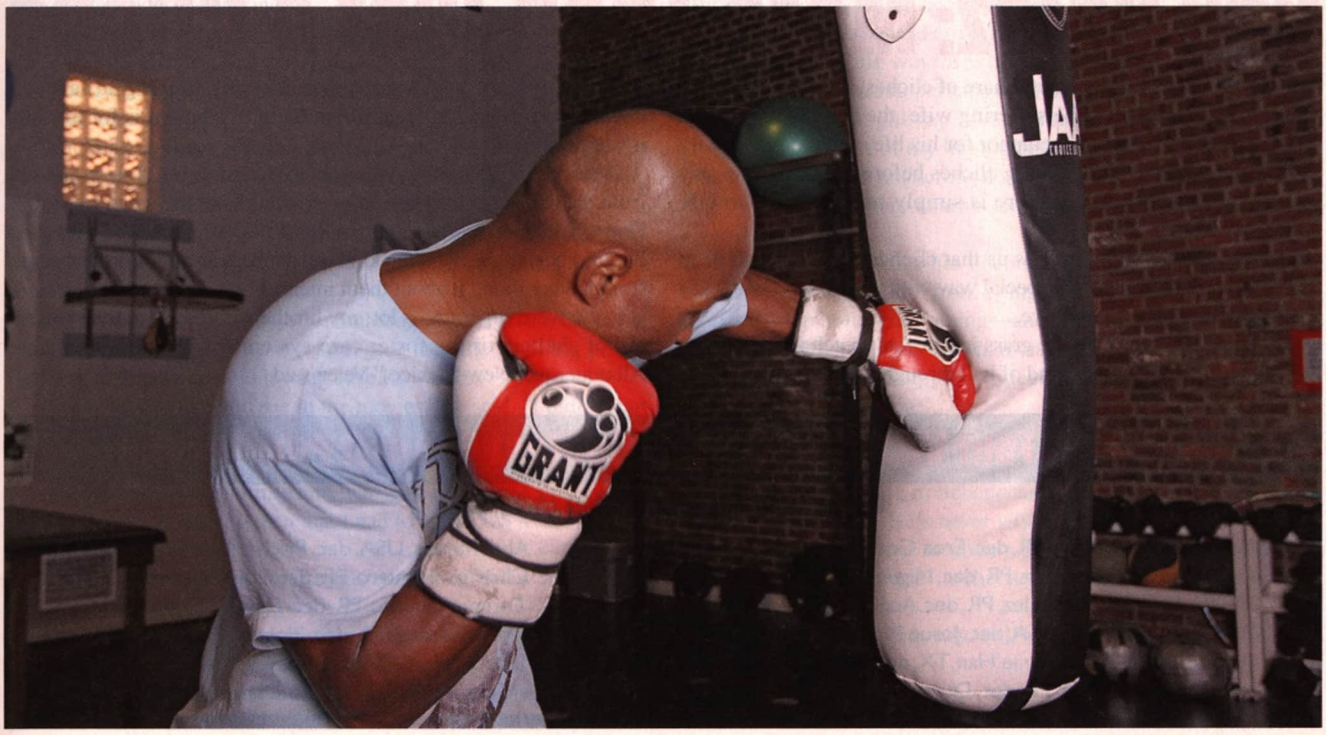
Working the heavybag teaches you how to punch with velocity and speed and strengthens and quickens the muscles you use to punch. It also builds muscle-endurance. Want a great left hook? Work that punch to death on the heavybag. Work it until you can't move your arm anymore, but work it right (notice where my right hand is). You'll build a killer left hook. Same with the right hand.

FOR POWER ONLY

Sometimes you'll want to work just on building power. Then it's okay to have your trainer hold the bag in place, like Danny Davis is doing for me here. But it's only for building power, because no opponent in his right mind is going to stand there and just let you hit on him.

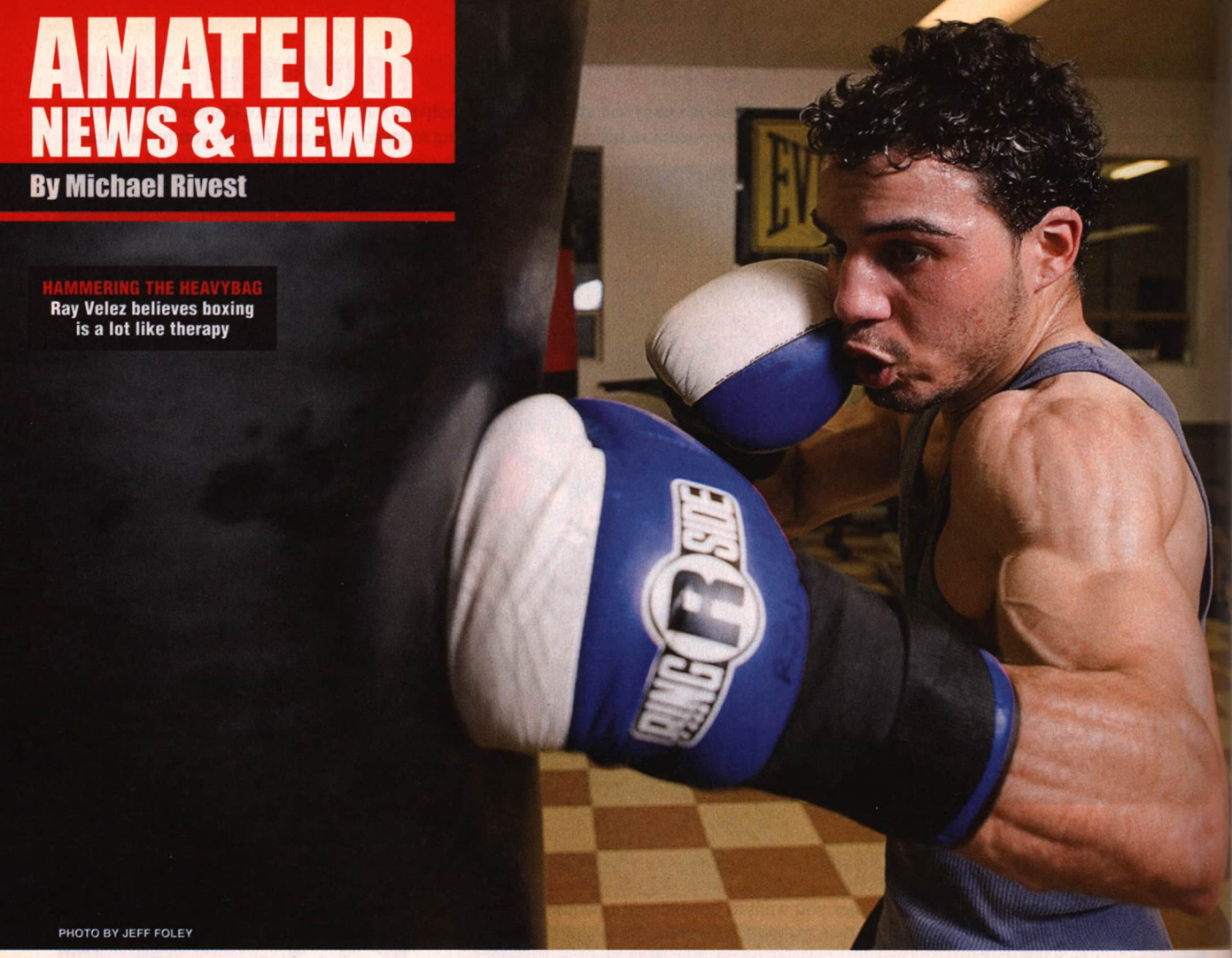
MORE THAN ANYTHING, WORK THE JAB

The jab is the one punch more than any other you want to be able to throw no matter how tired you are. Want to make sure your left arm is never too tired to jab? Work it on the heavybag. Work it over and over and over, and, when fight night comes, the jab will be with you for as long as you need it.



AMATEUR NEWS & VIEWS

By Michael Rivest



HAMMERING THE HEAVYBAG
Ray Velez believes boxing is a lot like therapy

PHOTO BY JEFF FOLEY

Ray Velez: More Than Just A Cliché

Boxing has more than its share of clichés: the comeback, the grizzled trainer, the suffering wife, the hard-luck kid who finds in the ring a metaphor for his life, and the writer who smugly lists tired boxing clichés before proceeding to rely on one himself. Sorry, but there is simply no other way to talk about Ray Velez.

A peek into his life reminds us that clichés often conceal deep truths. Boxing resonates in a special way with people who know life can be a solitary fight to survive.

Chasing a ball through the grass just doesn't reach that far down nor does throwing another kind of ball through a hoop.

"In boxing, it's just you and somebody looking to take you down," said Velez. "It's real life in there. It's how it is for me, how it was."

Velez is a remarkable young man. He may be 25 now and safe from the dangers that stalked him as a child, but the memories linger. One of 12 children growing up in Brooklyn, New York, he talks about his hard beginnings with the kind of openness and comfort that comes from having thought about them intensely—and often.

"We were separated a lot, my brothers and sisters, living in and out of shelters or the foster care systems of New York City and Albuquerque, New Mexico," Velez said.

USA Nets Four Victories In Dual Contest Against Puerto Rico

Oxnard, California, November 16-20, 2010

108-pounds: Angel Acosta, PR, dec. Eros Correa, USA
114-pounds: Edwin Rodriguez, PR, dec. Miguel Cartagena, USA
114-pounds: Jonathan Gonzalez, PR, dec. Adam Lopez, USA
123-pounds: Joseph Diaz, USA, dec. Josue Machado, PR
132-pounds (female): Stephanie Han, TX, dec. Kiria Tapia, PR
132-pounds: Jose Pedraza, PR, dec. Duran Caferro, USA
141-pounds: Abel Ramos, USA, dec. Prichard Colon, PR
152 pounds: Christian Peguero, PR, dec. Luis Olivares Jr., USA
165-pounds: Enrique Collazo, PR, dec. Daquan Arnett, USA
178-pounds: Jerry Odom, USA, dec. Hector Cervantes, PR
201-pounds: Jose Santiago, PR, dec. Pernell Mitchell, USA
201+ pounds: Gerardo Bisbal, PR, dec. Danny Kelly, USA

JUSTIN VELEZ: MAKING IT HAPPEN

When 23-year-old Justin Velez talks about boxing, it's with the same intensity as older brother Ray: "We've been through hard times, me and Ray." But it's okay now.

"I didn't know about his history because he never talked about it," said Alex Velasquez, Velez' trainer at Gym X in the tough Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, New York. "I just saw somebody who was very dedicated to his young son and working lots of hours."

PHOTO BY STEVEN RIVERS

POUNDING THE PADS
Trainer Alex Velasquez works with Justin Velez

The younger Velez started boxing at 17.

"Boxing kept me off the streets," Justine said. "I had no time to get involved in any nonsense. Besides, Ray and I promised each other a long time ago that our lives would be different than what we knew growing up. We knew it would be up to us, and nobody else to make that happen."

Boxing has been a big part of Justin's strategy for that better life. "It's where I take the anger and frustration inside of me. It gives me a place to bring it."

So, when Justin's not at his more than full-time job with a New York City sewer & drain contractor or with four-year-old Justin, Jr., he's in the gym with Alex.

"Alex believed in me when nobody else did," Velez said. "He understands what boxing means."

They'd be alternately placed with mom or dad or grandma only to be removed again, separated, and returned to the foster care system for another custody dervish.

Only Ray and younger brother, Justin, now 23, stayed together through the kind of childhood that typically winds up stuck in the social service system, or worse, the criminal justice one.

But instead, at age 16, Velez made his getaway. He and girlfriend, Lucy, moved to upstate New York to trade an unstable life for a hard working but independent one.

That was nine years ago. Now they each have two jobs working 60-hours a week, but on a split schedule that allows them to be effective, loving parents to seven-year-old Julius and two-year-old Jose.

"Mr. Velez is about as involved as a parent can get," said Michelle Ward, program director of a local after-school program. "He's loving and caring and is really the picture perfect father."

"I learned how to parent because of my background," Velez said, "because I saw so much of what not to do. I give my sons the life I never had."

He is also one course shy of completing an associate's degree in computer technology. A four-year degree is in the planning phase. But back to the cliché: Did boxing save Ray Velez?

"Yeah, but not like you see in the movies," he said. "I didn't start boxing until five years ago. I was already settled and a father but still trying to come to terms with my past. I was just fooling around one day and started boxing with Justin, who'd been doing it already, and he kicked my butt. I knew then that I had to learn how to do that," he added, laughing.

But the power of the metaphor was not lost on Velez, who is both intelligent and deep.

"I saw it all there in front of me right from the start, how life is a boxing ring, you know? In both, you're in there by yourself. Nobody will save you. People can shout out what to do, but they can't do it for you. You win or lose depending on how you handle yourself."

He pauses before continuing, in a way that suggests he's still mining the metaphor. "It's also not a question of whether you'll get hurt because, like in life, you will get hurt. It's just about whether you're willing to get back up. And it's not about fighting fear like a lot of people think, but more about getting used to feeling it and not letting it stop you."

For Velez, boxing lessons are life lessons. There is no difference. No, boxing didn't save him, as the cliché would have it. He didn't stumble into a gym at age eight and become a wealthy world champion with thousands of adoring fans, but it did save him in another, more subtle way: Boxing centered him. It gave his fragmented history context, perhaps even meaning.

"I guess you might say it's like therapy," Ray continued. "It brought all the parts of my life together, even the parts that seem to make no sense. I'm not screwed up trying to understand it. I don't have to hold my history at arms length anymore. The ring makes it all come together."

The 152-pound Velez has become a fine amateur boxer. While his busy life prevents him from going to every national tournament, it doesn't stop him from training—and winning. His 2009 trip to the National Golden Gloves Tournament took him all the way to the third match before dropping a decision to three-time national champion, Errol Spence.

"Ray is the most disciplined and hardest working boxer you could find," said Paul Brown, USA Boxing Official who trains at the same gym as Velez in Schenectady, New York. "He brings his kids to his workouts. He's never without them."

Velez' goal: "I want to open a gym in the next few years and help people who come in the door in the same way boxing helped me."

Imagine the lucky kids who will be on the receiving end of those lessons. ■

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by Mike Coppinger

Lightweight Adrien Broner

When Adrien Broner was just six-years old, his father, Thomas Knight, concerned with the amount of scraps his son was getting into, brought him to the Mount Auburn Community Center Gym. They immediately put Broner into a fight, which he won handily, even dropping his young opponent.

Seeing how advanced Broner was, trainer Mike Stafford decided to put him in with future Olympian Rau'shee Warren, who beat Broner and made him cry.

Since then, Broner has plied his craft in Cincinnati under the guidance of Stafford, fighting over 300 amateur fights (279-15) before turning pro in 2008.

Now, the 21-year-old, who campaigns at both junior lightweight and lightweight, is on the fast track, backed by powerful advisor Al Haymon and Golden Boy Promotions. He's run his record to 18-0 (15) while often fighting on the off-TV undercards of major Golden Boy shows, getting much needed exposure. And with the backing of Cincinnati promoter Andrew Williams, Broner is being built into a local attraction as well. The biggest challenge now is getting rounds for Broner, who has stopped eight of his opponents in the opening stanza.

"I was always told 'once they're hurt, get them out of there. So that's what I try to do," Broner said. "I like to put on a show."

One such first-round kayo came on November 6, on the HBO's *Boxing After Dark* untelevised undercard, headlined by Zab Judah's victory over Lucas Matthysse in Newark, New Jersey. Broner's many talents were on display against veteran Ilido Julio: blazing hand speed, accurate combination punching, and explosive power. Also on display—Broner's swagger. After the first knockdown, "The Problem" shimmied to the neutral corner. When he had finished Julio, Broner celebrated with a backward somersault and a dance, which he calls "The Mr. Miyagi".

An observer at ringside liked what he saw.

"When I dropped the guy [Julio] the first time, I was talking to Roy Jones (ringside to call the TV fights for HBO) and I said 'that's how you used to do it,'" Broner said. "Roy Jones said that I'm gonna be a champion, just keep doing what I'm doing.

"I feel like every time I fight, the crowd is coming to see me, even if I'm not the main event. It's my time to shine, my time to put on a show, and I just like to perform. I love attention. I don't think anybody in this boxing game's got more swagger than me."

Broner is an entertainer, even at this early stage of his career, making dramatic entrances for local fights. In a 2010 encounter with Carlos Claudio, he was lowered to the ring from the rafters. With his confident demeanor and flashy style, it's no surprise who his favorite fighter is.

"I watch Floyd Mayweather a lot, so a lot of my craft comes from him," said Broner, who feels that his best weapon is his jab. "I love him to death."

But like the pugilist he looks up to, Broner has had his scrapes with the law. In March of 2010, he was arrested in Cincinnati for his alleged involvement with a purse snatching, a charge that was later dropped.

"This kid's had some trouble in the past," said Williams, who promotes several up-and-coming Cincinnati fighters under his R & R Promotions. "It's stopped some opportunities for him, but I think it's made him a better person. It's made him a little bit more focused because he knows the pitfalls that can hurt him. "

While growing up in Cincinnati, Broner saw many of his friends fall victim to gun violence. As his star grows, he realizes that trouble will seek him out. Luckily, he has a strong support system on which to lean.

"Coming up in Cincinnati, it was kind of hard for me to stay on track," Broner said. "But now I'm on track, and I'm not looking back. Without Andrew Williams, Mike Stafford, my parents, and boxing, I don't know where I would be."

Broner is very close with his mother, Dorothy, and father, Thomas. His father attends all of his fights and plays a big role in his development. His twin brother, Andre, with whom he used to train, has also been a positive influence in his life. But the addition of three new members to his family had a particularly strong impact. Broner has two sons, three-year-old Adrien Jr. and one-year-old Armani. His daughter, Nariya is two. Together, they drive him to reach even further heights in boxing.

"It's great to see my son watch a boxing fight and then tell me 'Daddy, I wanna box,'" Broner said. "It definitely makes me train harder, fight harder, because I know I have to be a good role model for them."

Williams hopes to get Broner around 10 fights in 2011, keeping him busy in hopes of stepping up his competition toward the end of the year.

PRO RECORD

2008		
May 31	Allante Davis, Cincinnati, OH	KO 1
Aug. 8	David Warren Huffman, Cincinnati	KO 1
Oct. 9	Ramon Flores, Carson, CA	KO 1
Nov. 22	Terrence Jett Las Vegas, NV	KO 6
Dec. 12	Scott Furney, Las Vegas	KO 1
2009		
Jan. 24	Jose Alfredo Lugo, Los Angeles, CA	W 6
May 3	Eric Ricker, Cincinnati	W 6
April 4	Angel Rodriguez, Austin, TX	KO 4
May 8	Fernando Quintero, Ft. Worth, TX	W 8
June 27	William Kickett, Las Vegas	KO 6
Aug. 22	Edgar Portillo, Houston, TX	KO 1
Sept. 5	Henry White Jr., Cincinnati	KO 3
Nov. 28	Tommy Atencio, Cincinnati	KO 1
2010		
Jan. 23	Roberto Acevedo, Cincinnati	KO 4
May 14	Rafael Lora, Bronx, NY	KO 1
June 19	Carlos Claudio, Cincinnati	KO 6
Sept. 4	Gullermo Sanchez, Cincinnati	KO 2
Nov. 6	Ilido Julio, Newark, NY	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAWS	KOs
18	18	0	0	15

"We are definitely collaborating with Golden Boy Promotions, and I anticipate you seeing him on HBO or Showtime by late 2011 or early 2012," said Williams, who has known Broner for six years.

When he eventually gets his shot and faces adversity, he will have an experience to draw from. In his ninth pro bout, in May 2009, Broner won a majority decision victory over Fernando Quintero, who entered undefeated at 7-0-1 (0). The fight took place outdoors at the Sundance Square in Fort Worth, Texas, on an especially hot and muggy day. The weather made for an arduous affair, the only time Broner has gone eight rounds. But he came out on top in what he deemed the hardest fight of his young career.

"His smartness and the way he analyzes fighters are impressive," said Stafford, who has coached Broner his entire amateur and pro career. "He can go up and down in weight. He's able to keep up with a little guy due to his speed. The guys bigger than him, he can beat them to the punch."

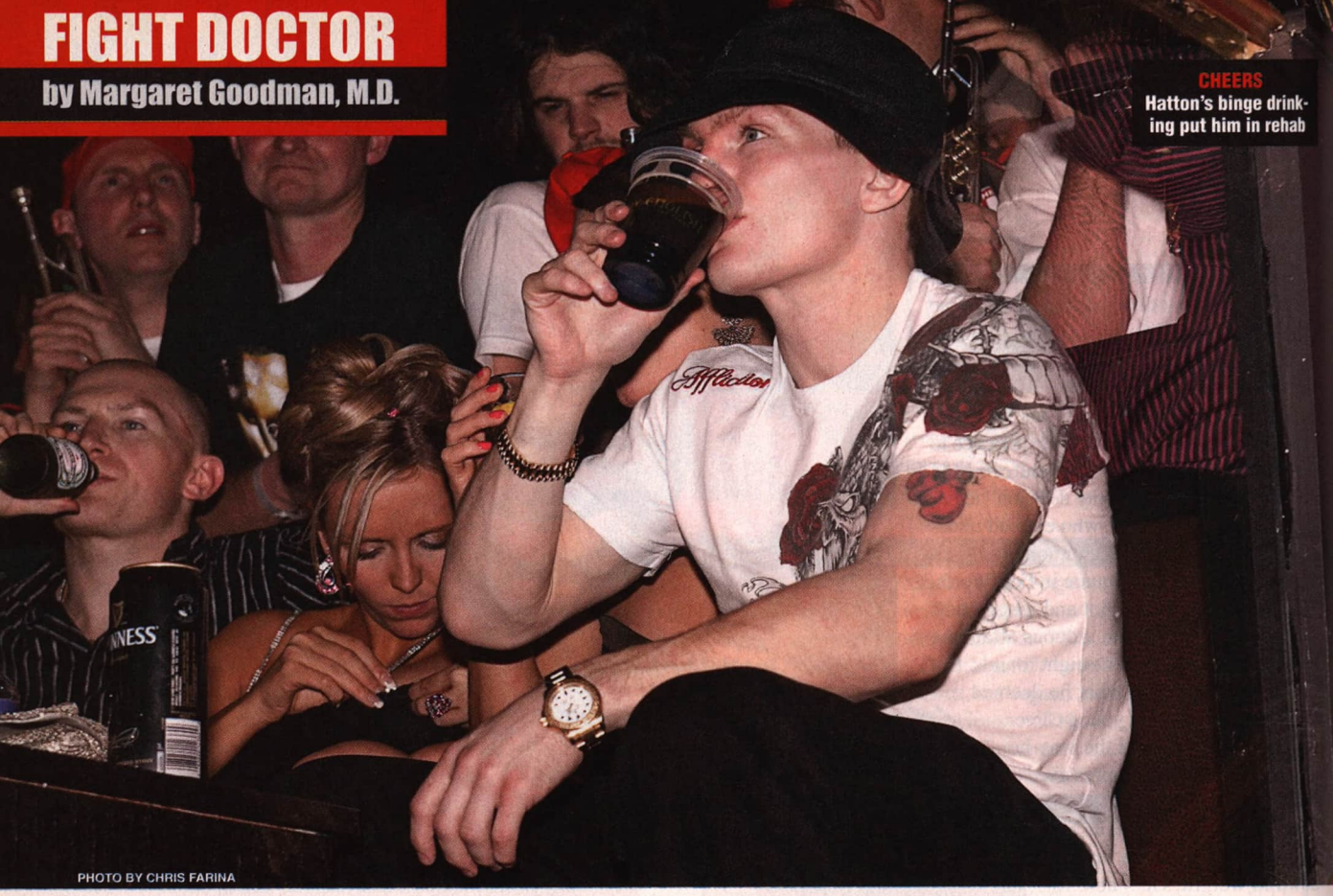
Broner said he's comfortable fighting anywhere from 130 to 140 and will most likely be fighting at welterweight in a few years.

He is already creating a buzz as a sparring partner, twice helping fighters prepare for Tim Bradley, working in camp with both Lamont Peterson and Devon Alexander before their matches with the undefeated junior welterweight. That kind of sparring is sure to serve him well.

"Adrien has a tremendous amount of respect for the fighters that came before him," Williams said. "Aaron Pryor, Ezzard Charles, Bud Smith (all Cincinnati legends). We know our history."

If Adrien Broner can fulfill his vast potential, he could be Cincinnati's next boxing star. ■

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS



CHEERS
Hatton's binge drinking put him in rehab

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Alcohol: Riskier Than A Knockout Punch

Twenty-eight-year-old former middleweight champion Kelly Pavlik is currently at California's Betty Ford Center for alcohol abuse. Evidently, his problem began after he won the title from Jermaine Taylor in Atlantic City in September 2007. According to a recent Yahoo! Sports article, this will be Pavlik's second go-round with rehab. His first time was prior to his April 17th loss against Sergio Martinez.

Pavlik is not alone. During my lengthy stint as a ring physician, it was impossible to ignore alcohol use—especially binge drinking as a major problem among boxers. I still recall Boxing Hall of Fame inductee Julio Cesar Chavez Sr. guzzling a Corona in a makeshift dressing room at the back of a Las Vegas Hilton ballroom immediately following his 1997 win against Tony Martin—while I conducted his postfight exam!

According to former Nevada chief ring physician, Dr. Flip Homansky, "I've seen fighters turn to alcohol the same as the rest of society—with a loss, out of anger, from depression, and from frustration with injuries."

But what fighters fail to comprehend is that compared to other substances, alcohol can have the greatest short-term and long-term career consequences—even in small amounts. It is fallacious thinking to assume that, as in Pavlik's case, beer is safer than wine or liquor. Not true! It is the amount of alcohol one drinks, not the type that is important.

There are several studies that point to the health benefits of moderate alcohol consumption, referring to no more than two drinks per day in a male/one in a female. But, in a boxer, the risks of even small amounts clearly outweigh any possible benefits due to alcohol's toxicity on every organ system.

Alcohol acts as a powerful diuretic. It can produce severe dehydration and electrolyte imbalance. This dehydration can require days for recovery and increase a boxer's risk to muscle injuries, decreased appetite, and muscle wasting. It will slow reaction time and mental acuity for several days after consumption and decreases hand eye coordination while impairing judgment.

Chronic or binge drinking—five or more drinks at a single sitting—will lower serum testosterone levels. In turn, muscle mass, injury recovery, and athletic performance are affected.

Alcohol increases fat storage, produces weight gain, and impairs even a healthy boxer's metabolism to make weight. Homansky notes, "Alcohol gives a fighter empty calories. It is the quickest way for a welterweight to start fighting as a light heavy."

Ricky Hatton's perpetual history of weight issues and alcohol binges demonstrate that drinking was a factor in his career decline and self-reported depression.

Boxers that drink will bleed and swell more readily as it lessens blood clotting. Chavez, who has been in and out of rehab for the last five years, is a terrific example of a fighter who bled excessively in most of his later bouts.

Recent research has demonstrated that chronic alcohol intake will lead to severe depression. Alcoholics have a 5-20 times greater risk of suicide than the general population, and about 15 percent of alcoholics commit suicide.

As a neurologist, I believe that alcohol's greatest negative effects are on the nervous system and brain. It results in brain shrinkage and loss of brain cells (neurons). This is especially true in the frontal lobes that control judgment and cognitive function and the back

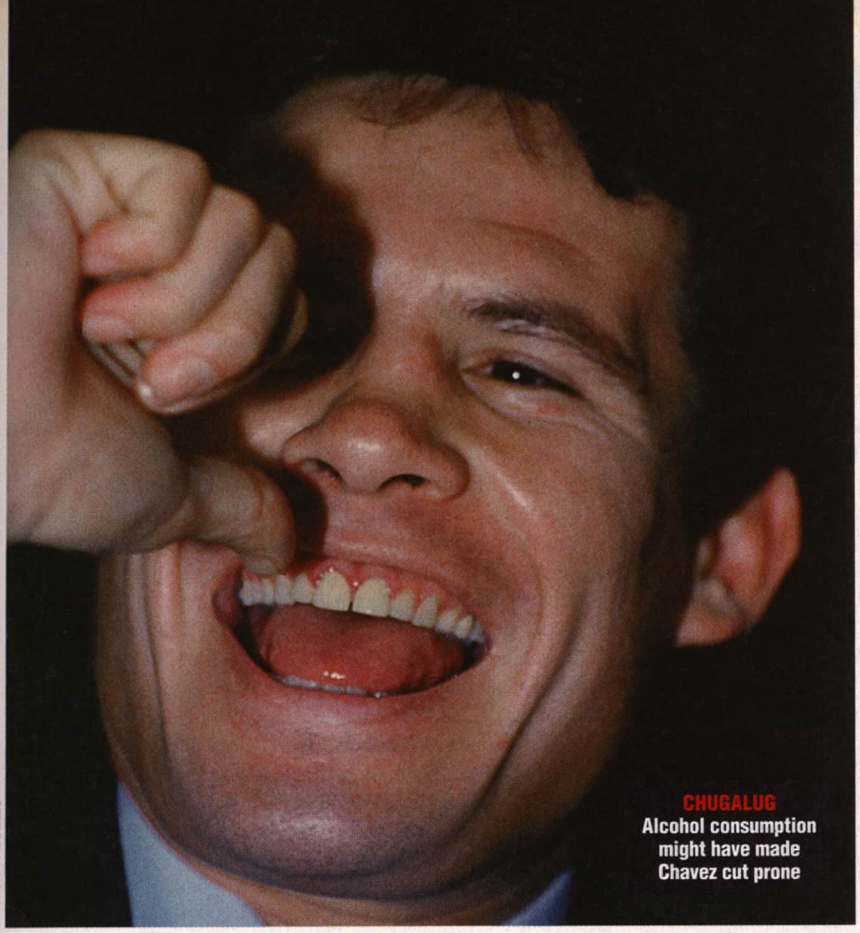


PHOTO BY AL BELLO

CHUGALUG
Alcohol consumption might have made Chavez cut prone

of the brain that controls balance and coordination—things a boxer cannot do without.

Dementia pugilistica, or the punch-drunk syndrome, is much more prevalent in a fighter that drinks. The truth is that alcohol and headshots have an additive effect in destroying brain cells.

In an in-depth 1983 *Sports Illustrated* article entitled, "Too Many Punches, Too Little Concern," covered all of the current research on chronic brain injury in boxing. Note: this was before MRI scans, and, although this article was written 27 years ago, sadly, little has changed.

Three boxers, including former heavyweight contender Jerry Quarry, submitted to exams by an independent neurologist. Quarry was found to have shrinkage of his brain on a CT scan, poor short-term memory, and poor balance.

Quarry never discussed his alcohol use with the investigators, but he was infamous for having a drink in one hand and a girl on the other arm—even the night before his second bout with Ali. Although, the doctors urged Quarry to stop boxing, following the *SI* article, he went on to have three more fights, until losing a decision in 1992 against a fighter with a record of 3-4-1.

Balance can be further destroyed by alcohol's toxicity to the peripheral nervous system (nerves in your extremities and spine). When you walk, run, or stand, your brain tells your feet where it wants them to go, and your feet tell your brain about the surface they are standing on. If the peripheral nerves in your feet are killed, you are automatically off-balance. It is why a cop asks a DUI candidate to stand with his eyes closed and walk a straight line.

On a positive note, researchers at California's Stanford University have found that after at least six months of complete abstinence, the brain can repair itself. The mental abilities and cognitive function of the study group of long-term alcohol users, who had been sober between six months and 13 years, were now equal to the control group who had never been alcoholics.

I could list countless negative health effects to a boxer from alcohol, but the bottom line is that a boxer needs more than two good hands. He needs speed, agility, strength, balance, and good brain function. Drinking, even in small amounts, will significantly interfere with his success, irrespective of his talent level. I am not saying a boxer should never take a drink, but I hope that by looking at famous boxers, present and past, others will understand that even a legal drug can ruin a career and destroy a life. ■

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From Bagg To Worse, 2010 Edition

With two simple words, the Baggnoceros can explain why awards that celebrate the "best" of something are ridiculous: Sandra Bullock.

The Baggster is a longtime HBO subscriber, on account of the fact that you need to be in order to be a fight fan, but boxing isn't the only thing he watches on that network. There are certain shows that only air after midnight and are the reason parental channel locks were invented. There's the new series *Boardwalk Empire*, which it turns out is not a documentary series about Arturo Gatti but is still quite good and features all of the Baggomatic's staples: sex, violence, and boozing. And there are also plenty of movies, which is where Ms. Bullock comes in.

HBO recently started airing *The Blind Side* in heavy rotation, so yours truly checked it out on a slow night at the Bagg estate. And now that he's seen it, he has to ask the question: How in the blue hell did Sandy win an Oscar for that steaming pile of mediocrity? Did she really beat out Meryl Streep? Since when does "Best Actress" mean "Best Actress Relative To Our Low Expectations For Her As A One-Note Star Of Unimaginative Romantic Comedies"? (And don't get the Baggburger started on the fact that the movie was an after-school special disguised as a full-length feature film or the way almost every black character was a degrading racial stereotype.)

The bottom line is this: If Sandra Bullock can win a major acting award, then awards no longer have any meaning.

Unless, that is, the awards run counter to all the typical butt-kissing positivity and instead single out the worst of the worst. That's what the Baggies do. And that's why they're the only awards that matter.

2010 may have ended on a relatively high note, but you're kidding yourself if you think it was a good year for boxing. It was a lousy year for boxing. So it's time to focus on the lousiest of the lousy. And a quick note to all of this year's Baggie "winners": Due to the latest round of budget cuts, we're not sending you any awards. Just reach into the nearest trash can, pull out the first banana peel, dirty diaper, or wilted lettuce leaf that hits your hand, and pin that bad boy on your lapel with pride. Now, on to the 2010 Baggies:

Loser Of The Year: This choice might surprise some people, since Floyd Mayweather seems an obvious selection, but the Baggaroosky doesn't believe in doing the obvious, and besides, we'll get to Li'l Floyd later in the Baggies. Instead, the grand-prize loser this year is **Paulie Malignaggi**, who always struck the Bagginator as a no-good punk, won a bunch of people over in recent years with his in-ring toughness, but let his punk colors show through again in 2010. Promoter Lou DiBella got the absolute maximum out of this boring, punchless blabbermouth for nine years. So what did Appalling Paulie do when he left DiBella for Golden Boy? He talked nonstop trash about his former promoter, using terms like "slave contract" and "leeching."

Basically, Malignaggi lost 99 percent of his value as an attraction and a contender when Amir Khan demolished him in May, and either out of delusional denial or to get people talking about him again, the ingrate dragged DiBella's name through the mud even though you couldn't have done more with less than DiBella did. Malignaggi is on the verge of becoming a loser in the ring, since he has almost nothing left at age 30. But he's most definitely already a loser out of the ring, every bit the disrespectful punk we thought he was when he first brought his *Jersey Shore* hairstyle into our lives nearly a decade ago.

Imbecile Of The Year: The Baggiosyncracy did some stupid things in his youth (and in his adulthood and in his old age), but even he knows you don't make fun of someone with a debilitating disease or disability. **Brandon Rios** is apparently on a whole 'nuther level of stupidity. With video cameras rolling, Rios—who goes by the nickname "Bam Bam" but should switch over to "Pebbles" to describe the size of his brain—decided it would be a good idea to do an impersonation of Freddie Roach experiencing Parkinson's tremors. Thankfully, the video cut out before we got to see his Corky Thatcher or his Christopher Reeve.

We'd let Antonio Margarito share in the award for mocking Roach in the same video, but we already knew "The Plastered Bastard" was an imbecile. Rios is the real revelation of idiocy here. Here's hoping that Roach is in the other corner when Rios gets stiffened for the first time, so Freddie can run into the ring, lie down flat on his face, and do his best Brandon Rios impression.

AND THE STINGRAY GOES TO ...

Houston-based junior lightweight Angel Rodriguez, who brought what looked like a mediocre hockey record of 4-4-2 into his fight against 11-0 Juan Martin Elorde and proceeded to defeat the grandson of Filipino legend Flash Elorde. Despite what the aforementioned Laurence Cole's career would suggest, your last name can only take you so far in this business.

But enough about the guy who lost the fight; let's talk about the guy who won. Rodriguez has done it all the hard way, fighting 10 undefeated opponents in 12 pro fights. He lost to four of them. And he drew with two of them. But he's now beaten three of them (plus one no-contest). The point is, he's a .500-ish fighter, but he's gone .500 fighting mostly 1.000-ish fighters. He's a true Stingray, a guy who only looks like a soft touch until you examine his line-by-line carefully or watch him in action. In his four rounder against Elorde, Rodriguez won 40-36 on two cards and 39-37 on the third.

Rodriguez probably wouldn't do quite as well against the prime Flash Elorde. But the Baggstradamus is going out on a limb and saying that Rodriguez would take the current version of Flash to the woodshed. (And if the Baggman is wrong and Elorde beats Rodriguez despite being dead for the past 25 years, then that would be the greatest Stingray of all-time.)

DUBIOUS HONOR
Malignaggi wins Bagg's top prize

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT
Arum continues to snub his customers

Egomaniac Of The Year: Ever heard that saying, "The customer is always right"? In **Bob Arum's** world, the customer gets what the big boss man gives him, like it or not. It's one thing for a promoter to curse out a rival promoter or a network exec or something. But Arum cursed out the fans and told them to, ahem, go watch late-night HBO soft porn all by themselves, when he repeatedly made them wait (and continues to) for Juan Manuel Lopez vs. Yuriorkis Gamboa. And toward the end of the year, he pulled the same garbage of denying the fans what they want when he insisted he'd rather make Manny Pacquiao-Shane Mosley than Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez III.

On top of that, Arum didn't learn his lesson about stadium fights, that if you want to fill the stadium, you need to make a quality fight. Ego blinded Arum as to why ticket sales for Miguel Cotto-Yuri Foreman at Yankee Stadium were disappointing, and he went ahead and repeated the mistake for Pacquiao-Margarito, another fight only he wanted to see.

Customer satisfaction just wasn't a priority for Arum in 2010. At least he scored perfect marks in self-satisfaction.

Wuss Of The Year: Told you that you wouldn't have to wait long to see **Floyd Mayweather** collect a Baggie! "Money" completed the wuss trifecta in 2010: He ducked a fight with Pacquiao, he ducked it a second time, and he got himself accused of beating up a woman. If he happens to end up going to jail, he'll have plenty of time to contemplate the irony of how he could have stayed out of trouble if he'd been in training for a fight. Would you rather have $40-million or your freedom? Mayweather could have had both, and instead he might end up with neither.

THE MONTHLY MAILBAGG

The main text of the column ran a little long this month, so we're keeping the Mailbagg short and sweet, like Baby Jake Matlala dipped in caramel:

Mr. Baggerific,

I can't wait for the Nonito Donaire vs. Fernando Montiel fight! Who do you think is going to win, and is it going to be for THE RING title?

Enrico Gonzalez
Phoenix, AZ

Enrico,

Let's answer the easy part first: If it comes off as planned in February (in other words, if Bob Arum doesn't realize at the last minute that he's accidentally doing right by the fight fans), it won't be for THE RING belt because Donaire hasn't done enough yet in the 118-pound division to earn a high ranking. The hope is that the winner of this fight meets the winner of Showtime's bantamweight tournament, and that would stand a good chance of producing a RING champ.

The tougher part of the question is who will win. That's like asking a guy to choose between a prime Ursula Andress and a prime Raquel Welch. Or, for you female readers, like asking you to choose between a prime Paul Newman and a prime Jim Bagg. Anyway, the pick is Montiel because he wears short-shorts. The Baggtuagenarian loves all things old-school, and it doesn't get much more old-school than short-shorts.

PHOTO BY KOICHI KAMOSHIDA/GETTY IMAGES

WHO WEARS SHORT SHORTS?
Bagg is picking Montiel over Donaire for a very weird reason

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

NEAR MISS
Sulaiman almost snagged another Baggie

Flip-Flopping Fraud Of The Year: It just wouldn't feel like a true Baggie awards celebration without calling **Jose Sulaiman's** name at least once, so the Baggomatic made up a new award this year to make sure the Round Mound of Fee-Found could take home a prize. As is his custom, Sulaiman teased the boxing world with an announcement at the annual WBC convention (think Trekkie conventions with fewer fake ears) that he was stepping down as president and then changed his mind a few hours later. The whole thing is just an act to satisfy the oversized Weeble's need for attention. Well, here's a little more attention for him, a whole paragraph all about what a skunk he is.

On second thought, the Baggalagga's going to do a flip-flop of his own and deny Sulaiman the award. And thanks to that flip-flop, the award now goes to … **Jim Bagg**! It's about damned time God's gift to boxing writing won something.

Incompetent Referee of the Year: Since the Baggenberry spent an entire column raking Arthur Mercante Jr. over the coals earlier this year, he'll rake someone else over the coals this time around. And what could be more satisfying than raking a Cole over the coals? **Laurence Cole**, you get the narrow nod over fellow sadist Mercante here because you somehow found a way to make the Baggnanimous feel sorry for world-class scumbag Margarito. To not stop his fight with Pacquiao sometime during the last three rounds is to openly admit, "I don't have the faintest clue how to do my job." Luckily for Cole, when your daddy is the local commish, job performance is irrelevant.

Blind Judge of the Year: By finding a way to not award Sakio Bika a single round against Andre Ward, veteran **Marty Sammon** was a runaway winner for this Baggie. Seriously, the other two judges gave Bika two rounds apiece, and that bordered on insanity. But 120-108 for Ward? Once a respected referee and judge, this Sammon is swimming downstream fast. When asked after the fight whether he filled out his scorecard in advance, Sammon explained, "No. I *made up my mind* in advance, but I still filled out my scorecard round by round during the fight."

Idiot For The Ages Lifetime Achievement Award: This year, the Idiot for the Ages award becomes the Aged Idiot award, as we're splitting it between **Roy Jones** and **Evander Holyfield**, two over-the-hill legends who can't see the writing on the wall any better than they can see the punches coming. You can debate all you want which financially strapped, used up, fortysomething future Hall of Famer is more pathetic. The fact is that they're both guys who once had it all, now have nothing, and can't accept the reality that boxing will never again provide them with anything. There's a great chicken-or-the-egg debate over whether taking too many punches turned Jones and Holyfield into idiots or being idiots led them to take too many punches. Either way, their continuing embarrassment of themselves and the sport of boxing are undeniably Baggie-worthy.

Friend Request Denial of the Year: It turns out the great **Jim Bagg** is taking home his second Baggie, as he responds to the recent positive overtures made by fellow RING columnist Ivan Goldman with a definitive "Talk to the hand." Sorry, Goldman, but just because we're mutual enemies of Junior Mercante, that doesn't make us friends. Go ask Jeff Ryan if he'll star in that buddy cop movie with you instead. ■

Jim Bagg can be reached at Baggmeister@yahoo.com.

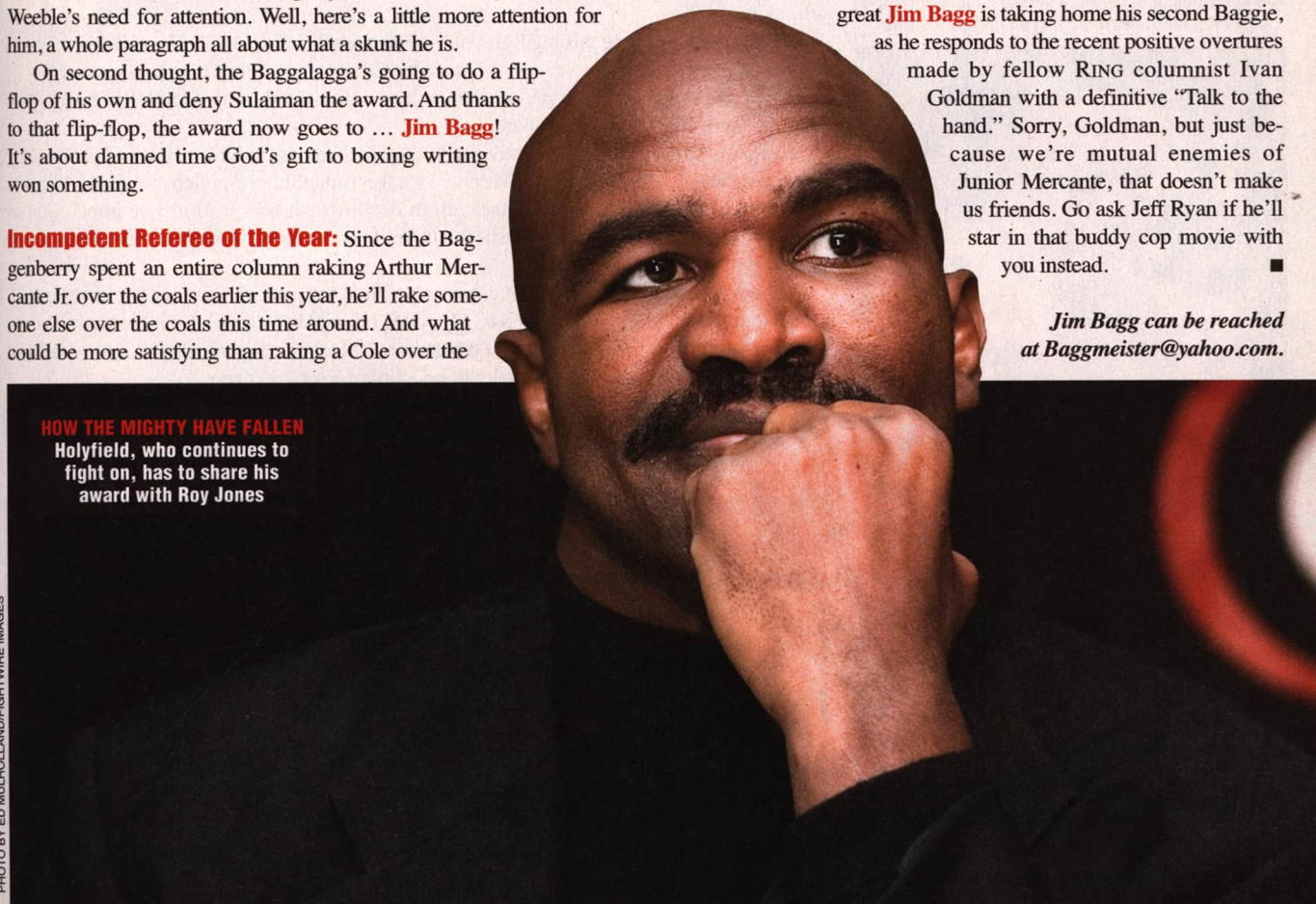

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN
Holyfield, who continues to fight on, has to share his award with Roy Jones

The First Great Match of 2011

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGESIMAGES

BANTAMWEIGHT SHOWDOWN
The upcoming bout between Mexican Montiel (above) and Filipino Donaire (below) should be a thriller

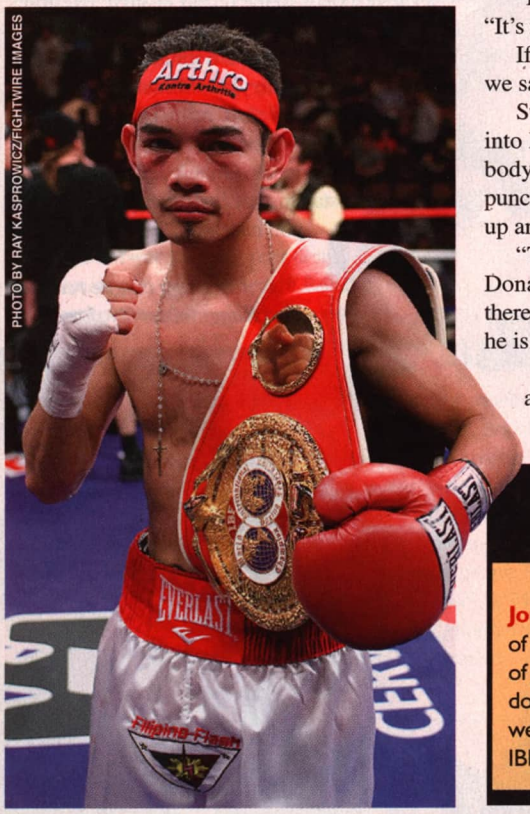

PHOTO BY RAY KASPROWICZ/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

THE RING had barely finished deciding on 2010's Fight of the Year when tickets went on sale for what may be a candidate for 2011's Fight of the Year. We are referring to the February 19 bantamweight shootout between WBO/WBC titlist **Fernando Montiel** and **Nonito Donaire** at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, a bout that has more angles than a mid-period Picasso.

First of all, there's a Filipino (Donaire) versus a Mexican (Montiel), which has long been one of boxing's great national rivalries and was revived in recent years by **Manny Pacquiao**'s series of battles with contemporary Mexican stars.

Then there's the matter of status. Donaire, 25-1 (17), is number four on THE RING's pound-for-pound list but hasn't quite reached the stardom predicted for him after his shocking win over **Vic Darchinyan** in 2007. A win over Montiel would take the "Filipino Flash" to a new plateau. Meanwhile, Montiel, 44-2-2 (34), may be THE RING's top seeded bantamweight, but he has spent much of his career slightly below the radar. With all due respect to Saul Alvarez, Mexican fans are still looking for their next superstar, and a win over Donaire would push Montiel up the ranks of Mexican favorites pretty quickly.

In a way, Montiel is in the same place **Juan Manuel Marquez** was just before Marquez fought Pacquiao the first time. Like Marquez, Montiel is a respected veteran who has yet to get widespread exposure. This is one of those rare scenarios where the older fighter may actually be the hungrier of the two.

"I've tried to fight him for years," Montiel told Internet writer David Kaufman. "I hope this time he doesn't back out. He always agrees to fight, and, when the time comes, he backs away. I hope this is the final time, and it happens."

Then there's the fact that Montiel nearly blew the fight in October when he was involved in a motorcycle accident in Mexico. Although rumors spread that he'd seriously injured his leg and he spent three weeks wearing heavy bandages, doctors reported no broken bones.

Montiel showed no ill effects in his first bout back, a two round stoppage of journeyman **Jovanny Soto** in December. Likewise, Donaire looked great in kayoing **Wladimir Sidorenko** a week earlier.

As for Donaire avoiding Montiel in the past, Donaire's trainer **Robert Garcia** says otherwise.

"He has been wanting this big fight for a while already," Garcia told *The Philippine News*. "It's not an easy fight. It's a very hard fight. Montiel is a tremendous Mexican warrior."

If Garcia seems generous, it's because he's actually friends with Montiel's family. Like we said, there are lots of angles here.

Stylewise, Donaire is very effective at boxing and moving, and he mixes a little brawling into his classy boxing repertoire. Montiel is a traditional boxer-puncher, mixing in good bodyshots with a slashing head attack. Both can hit with power. Both are good counter punchers. Donaire has one of the nastiest left hands in the sport, while Montiel can slice you up and hurt you with either hand.

"There's definitely a knockout coming because we're both looking for knockouts," Donaire told *Philippine Sports News*. "It could be an Ali-Frazier of the bantamweights; there's just two different styles. It would be a brawl." Donaire's comments lead us to believe he is taking Ali's role, while Montiel will be a little Mexican Frazier.

"I think he [Montiel] has a problem with guys that stick their jabs and use their length and move in and out of his punches," said Donaire. "He's going to have a tough time with me." ■

LISTEN UP

HBO will be televising Donaire-Montiel and featuring a rematch between **Mike Jones** and **Jesus Soto-Karass** on the undercard. Jones defeated Soto on the undercard of Pacquiao-Antonio Margarito last November. That bout was a majority decision in favor of Jones but was close enough to warrant a sequel … Montreal fans get a nice Showtime doubleheader on March 19 when local star **Lucian Bute** defends his IBF super middleweight belt against Belfast's **Brian Magee**, while Canadian **Steve Molitor** defends the IBF junior featherweight title against **Takalani Ndlovu**, all at The Bell Centre.

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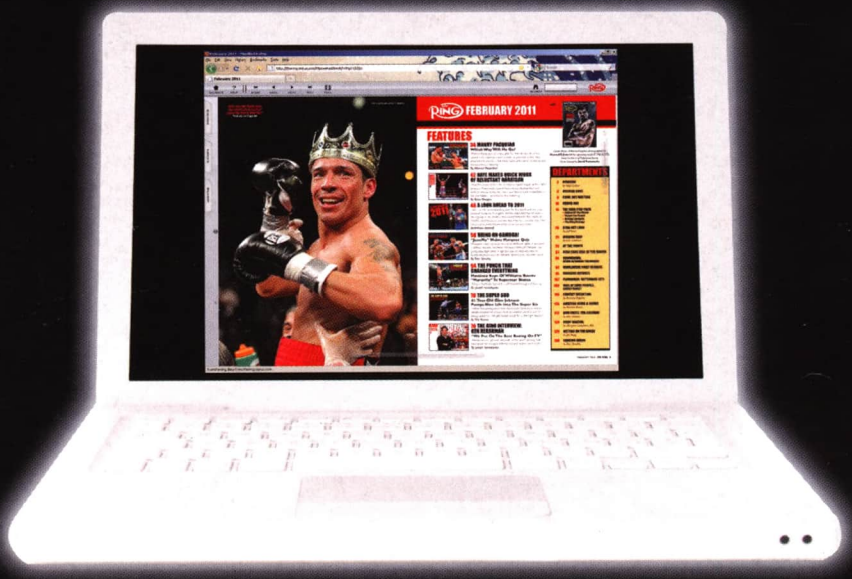

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE AD ON PAGE 26